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My dear,

THE

HISTORY

OF

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE FOURTH EDITION.



L O N D O N :

*Printed for L. GARDNER, opposite St. Clement's
Church in the Strand.*

M.DCC.LXVIII.

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*Contains nothing very extraordinary, yet such things
as are highly proper to be known.* 46

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*May be of some service to the ladies, especially the
younger sort, if well attended to.* 56

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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

CHAP. I.

Gives the Reader room to guess at what is to ensue, though ten to one but he finds himself deceived.



I was always my opinion, that fewer women were undone by love than vanity; and that those mistakes the sex are sometimes guilty of, proceed, for the most part, rather from inadvertency, than a vicious inclination. The ladies, however, I am sorry to observe, are apt to make too little allowances to each other on this score, and

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seem better pleased with an occasion to condemn than to excuse; and it is not above one, in a greater number than I will presume to mention, who, while she passes the severest censure on the conduct of her friend, will be at the trouble of taking a retrospect on her own. There are some who behold, with indignation and contempt, those errors in others, which, unhappily, they are every day falling into themselves; and as the want of due consideration occasions the guilt, so the want of due consideration also occasions the scandal: and there would be much less room either for the one or the other, were some part of that time, which is wasted at the toilet, in consulting what dress is most becoming to the face, employed in examining the heart, and what actions are most becoming of the character.

Betsy Thoughtless was the only daughter of a gentleman of good family and fortune in L ——— e, where he constantly resided, scarce ever going to London, and contented himself with such diversions as the country afforded. On the death of his wife, he sent his little favourite, then about ten years old, to a boarding-school, the governess of which had the reputation of a woman of great good sense, fine breeding, and every way qualified for the well forming of
the



lad, called master Sparkish, the son of a neighbouring gentleman: he had fallen in love with her at church, and had taken all opportunities to convince her of his passion: — she, proud of being looked upon as a woman, encouraged it — Frequent letters passed between them; for she never failed to answer those she received from him, both which were shewn to Miss Betsey, and this gave her an early light into the art and mystery of courtship, and consequently a relish for admiration. The young lover calling his mistress angel and goddess, made her long to be in her teens, that she might have the same things said to her.

This correspondence being by some accident discovered, the governess found it behoved her to keep a strict eye upon Miss Forward: all the servants were examined concerning the conveying any letters, either to or from her; but none of them knew any thing of the matter: it was a secret to all but Miss Betsey, who kept it inviolably. It is fit, however, the reader should not remain in ignorance.

Master Sparkish had read the story of Píramus and Thisbe: — he told his mistress of it, and in imitation of those lovers of antiquity, stuck his letters into a little crevice *he found in the garden-wall, whence she pulled*

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 5

pulled them out every day, and returned her answers by the same friendly breach, which he very gallantly told her in one of his epistles, had been made by the God of Love himself, in order to favour his suit;—so that all the governess's circumspection could not hinder this amour from going on without interruption; and could they have contented themselves with barely writing to each other, they might, probably, have done so 'till they both had been weary; but tho' I will not pretend to say that either of them had any thing in their inclinations that was not perfectly consistent with innocence, yet it is certain they both languished for a nearer conversation, which the fertile brain of Miss Forward at last brought about.

She pretended one Sunday in the afternoon to have so violent a pain in her head, that she could not go to church: Miss Betsy begged leave to stay and keep her company, and told the governess she would read a sermon or some other good book to her: the good old gentlewoman little suspecting the plot concerted between them, readily consented.

No body being left in the house but themselves, and one maid-servant, young Sparkish, who had previous notice at what hour to come, was let in at the garden door,

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door, the key being always in it. Miss Betsey left the lovers in an arbour, and went into the kitchen, telling the maid she had read Miss Forward to sleep, and hoped she would be better when she waked. She amused the wench with one little chat or other, 'till she thought divine service was near over, then returned into the garden to give her friends warning it was time to separate.

They had after this many private interviews, thro' the contrivance and assistance of Miss Betsey, who, quite charmed with being made the confidante of a person elder than herself, set all her wits to work, to render herself worthy of the trust reposed in her. Sometimes she made pretences of going to the milliner, the mantua-maker, or to buy something in town, and begged leave that Miss Forward should accompany her, saying, she wanted her choice in what she was to purchase. Sparkish was always made acquainted when they were to go out, and never fail'd to give them a meeting.

Miss Forward had a great deal of the coquet in her nature: — she knew how to play at fast-and-loose with her lover; and, young as she was, took a pride in mingling pain with the pleasure she bestowed.

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 7

stowed. Miss Betsy was a witness of all the airs the other gave herself on this occasion, and the artifices she made use of, in order to secure the continuance of his addresses; so that thus early initiated into the mystery of courtship, it is not to be wondered at that when she came to the practice she was so little at a loss.

This intercourse however, lasted but a small time; — their meetings were too frequent, and too little circumspection used in them not to be liable to discovery. The governess was informed, that in spite of all her care, the young folks had been too cunning for her; on which she went to the father of Sparkish, acquainted him with what she knew of the affair, and intreated he would lay his commands on his son to refrain all conversation with any of the ladies under her tuition. The old gentleman flew into a violent passion on hearing his son had already begun to think of love; — he called for him, and after having rated his youthful folly in the severest manner, charged him to relate the whole truth of what had passed between him and the young lady mentioned by the governess. The poor lad was terrified beyond measure at his father's anger, and confessed every particular of his meetings with *Miss Forward* and her companion; and

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thus Miss Betsey's share of the contrivance was brought to light, and drew on her a reprimand equally severe with that Miss Forward had received. The careful governess would not entirely depend on the assurance the father of Sparkish had given her, and resolved to trust neither of the ladies out of her sight, while that young gentleman remained so near them, which she knew would be but a short time, he having finished his school-learning, and was soon to go to the university. To prevent also any future stratagems being laid between Miss Betsey and Miss Forward, she took care to keep them from ever being alone together, which was a very great mortification to them; but a sudden turn soon after happened in the affairs of Miss Betsey, which put all I have been relating entirely out of her head.

CHAP.

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

CHAP. II.

Shews Miss Betsy in a new scene of life, and the frequent opportunities she had of putting in practice those lessons she was beginning to receive from her young instructress at the boarding-school.

THOUGH it is certainly necessary to inculcate into young girls all imaginable precaution, in regard to their behaviour towards those of another sex, yet I know not if it is not an error to dwell too much upon that topic. Miss Betsy might, possibly, have sooner forgot the little artifices she had seen practised by Miss Forward, if her governess, by too strenuously endeavouring to convince her how unbecoming they were, had not reminded her of them. Besides, the good old gentlewoman was far stricken in years; — time had set his iron fingers on her cheeks, — had left his cruel marks on every feature of the face, and she had little remains of having ever been capable of exciting those inclinations she so much condemned; so that what she said seemed to Miss Betsy as *spoke out of envy, or to shew her authority.*

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thority, rather than the real dictates of truth.

I have often remarked, that reproofs from the old and ugly have much less efficacy than when given by persons less advanced in years, and who may be supposed not altogether past sensibility themselves of the gaieties they advise others to avoid.

Though all the old gentlewoman said could not persuade Miss Betsy there was any harm in Miss Forward's behaviour towards young Sparkish, yet she had the complaisance to listen to her with all the attention the other could expect, or desire from her.

She was, indeed, as yet too young to consider of the justice of the other's reasoning, and her future conduct shewed, also, she was not of a humour to give herself much pains in examining, or weighing in the balance of judgment, the merit of the arguments she heard urged, whether for or against any point whatsoever. She had a great deal of wit, but was too volatile for reflection, and as a ship without sufficient ballast, is toss'd about at the pleasure of every wind that blows, so was she hurried

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 11

hurried through the ocean of life, just as each predominant passion directed.

But I will not anticipate that gratification, which ought to be the reward of a long curiosity. The reader, if he has patience to go through the following pages, will see into the secret springs which set this fair machine in motion, and produced many actions, which were ascribed, by the ill-judging and malicious world, to causes very different from the real ones. ✓

All this, I say, will be revealed in time; but it would be as absurd in a writer to rush all at once into the catastrophe of the adventures he would relate, as it would be impracticable in a traveller to reach the end of a long journey, without sometimes stopping at the inns in his way to it — To proceed therefore gradually with my history.

The father of Miss Betsy was a very worthy, honest, and good-natured man, but somewhat too indolent; and, by depending too much on the fidelity of those he entrusted with the management of his affairs, had been for several years involved in a law-suit; and, to his misfortune, the *aversion* he had to business rendered him *also incapable of extricating himself from*
B 6 it.

it, and the decision was spun out to a much greater length than it need to have been, could he have been prevailed upon to have attended in person the several courts of justice the cause had been carried through, by his more industrious adversary. The exorbitant bills, however, which his lawyers were continually drawing upon him, joined with the pressing remonstrances of his friends, at last roused him from that inactivity of mind which had already cost him so dear, and determined him not only to take a journey to London, but likewise not to return home, till he had seen a final end put to this perplexing affair.

Before his departure, he went to the boarding-school, to take his leave of his beloved Betsy, and renew the charge he had frequently given the governess concerning her education; adding, in a mournful accent, that it would be a long time before he saw her again.

These words, as it proved, had somewhat of prophetic in them. On his arrival in London, he found his cause in so perplexed and entangled a situation, as gave him little hopes of ever bringing it to a *favourable issue*. The vexation and *fatigue* he underwent on this account, joined
with

with the closeness of the town air, which had never agreed with his constitution, even in his younger years, soon threw him into that sort of consumption, which goes by the name of a galloping one, and, they say, is the most difficult of any to be removed. He died in about three months, without being able to do any great matters concerning the affair, which had drawn him from his peaceful home, and according to all probability hasten'd his fate. Being perfectly sensible, and convinced of his approaching dissolution, he made his will, bequeathing the bulk of his estate to him whose right it was, his eldest son, then upon his travels, through the greatest part of Europe; all his personals, which were very considerable in the Bank, and other public funds, he order'd should be equally divided between Francis his second son, at that time a student at Oxford, and Miss Betsy; constituting at the same time, as trustees to the said testament, Sir Ralph Trusty, his near neighbour in the country, and Mr. Goodman, a wealthy merchant in the city of London; both of them gentlemen of unquestionable integrity, and with whom he had preserved a long and uninterrupted friendship.

On the arrival of this melancholy news, Miss Betsey felt as much grief as it was possible for a heart, so young and gay as hers, to be capable of; but a little time, for the most part, serves to obliterate the memory of misfortunes of this nature, even in persons of a riper age; and had Miss Betsey been more afflicted than she was, something happened soon after, which would have very much contributed to her consolation.

Mr. Goodman having lived without marrying 'till he had reached an age, which one should have imagined would have prevented him from thinking of it all, at last took it into his head to become a husband. The person he made choice of was called Lady Mellasin, relict of a baronet, who having little or no estate, had accepted of a small employment about the court, in which post he died, leaving her ladyship one daughter, named Flora, in a very destitute condition. Goodman, however, had wealth enough for both, and consulted no other interest than that of his heart.

As for the lady, the motive on which she had consented to be his wife may easily be guessed; and when once made so,

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 13

with the closeness of the town air, which had never agreed with his constitution, even in his younger years, soon threw him into that sort of consumption, which goes by the name of a galloping one, and, they say, is the most difficult of any to be removed. He died in about three months, without being able to do any great matters concerning the affair, which had drawn him from his peaceful home, and according to all probability hasten'd his fate. Being perfectly sensible, and convinced of his approaching dissolution, he made his will, bequeathing the bulk of his estate to him whose right it was, his eldest son, then upon his travels, through the greatest part of Europe; all his personals, which were very considerable in the Bank, and other public funds, he order'd should be equally divided between Francis his second son, at that time a student at Oxford, and Miss Betsy; constituting at the same time, as trustees to the said testament, Sir Ralph Trusty, his near neighbour in the country, and Mr. Goodman, a wealthy merchant in the city of London; both of them gentlemen of unquestionable integrity, and with whom he had preserved a long and uninterrupted friendship.

There was something in this proposal which had indeed the face of a great deal of good-nature and consideration for miss Betfy, at least, it seemed highly so to Mr. Goodman; but as Sir Ralph Trusty was joined with him in the guardianship of that young beauty, and was at that time in London, he thought it proper to consult him on the occasion; which having done, and finding no objection on the part of the other, lady Mellasin, to shew her great complaisance to the daughter of her husband's deceased friend, sent her own woman to bring her from the boarding-school, and attend her up to London.

Miss Betfy had never seen this great metropolis; but had heard so much of the gay manner in which the genteel part of the world pass'd their time in it, that she was quite transported at being told she was to be removed thither. Mrs. Prinks (for so lady Mellasin's woman was called) did not fail to heighten her ideas of the pleasures of the place to which she was going, nor to magnify the goodness of her lady, in taking her under her care, with the most extravagant encomiums: it is not therefore to be wondered at, that neither *the tears of the good governess, who truly loved her, nor those of her dear miss For-*
ward,

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS 17

ward, nor of any of those she left behind, could give her any more than a momentary regret to a heart so possess'd with the expectations of going to receive every thing with which youth is liable to be enchanted. She promised, however, to keep up a correspondence by letters, which she did, 'till things, that seemed to her of much more importance, put her L————e acquaintance entirely out of her head.

She was met at the inn, where the stage put up, by Mr. Goodman in his own coach, accompanied by Miss Flora: the good old gentleman embraced her with the utmost tenderness, and assured her that nothing in his power, or in that of his family, would be wanting to compensate, as much as possible, the loss she had sustained by the death of her parents. The young lady also said many obliging things to her, and they seem'd highly taken with each other at this first interview, which gave the honest heart of Goodman an infinite satisfaction.

The reception given her by lady Mel-lasin when brought home, and presented to her by her husband, was conformable to what Mrs. Prinks had made her expect — that lady omitting nothing to *make her certain of being always treated*
by

by her with the same affection as her own daughter.

Sir Ralph Trusty, on being informed his young charge was come to town, came the next day to Mr. Goodman's to visit her.—His lady accompanied him. There had been a great intimacy and friendship between her and the mother of Miss Betsey, and she could not hold in her arms the child of a person so dear to her, without letting fall some tears, which were looked upon, by the company, as the tribute due to the memory of the dead. The conjecture, in part, might be true, but the flow proceeded from the mixture of another motive, not suspected:—that of compassion for the living. This lady was a woman of great prudence, piety, and virtue:—she had heard many things relating to the conduct of lady Mellasin, which made her think her a very unfit person to have the care of youth, especially those of her own sex. She had been extremely troubled when Sir Ralph told her, that Miss Betsey was sent for from the country, to live under such tuition, and would fain have opposed it, could she have done so without danger of creating a misunderstanding between him and Mr. Goodman, well knowing the bigotted respect the latter had for his wife, and how unwilling

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willing he would be to do any thing, that had the least tendency to thwart her inclinations. She communicated her sentiments, however, on this occasion, to no person in the world, not even to her own husband; but resolved, within herself, to take all the opportunities that fell in her way, of giving Miss Betsy such instructions as she thought necessary for her behaviour in general, and especially towards the family in which it was her lot to be placed.

Miss Betsy was now just entering into her fourteenth year,—a nice and delicate time in persons of her sex; since it is then they are most apt to take the bent of impression, which according as it is well or ill directed, makes, or mars, the future prospect of their lives. She was tall, well shap'd, and perfectly amiable, without being what is called a complete beauty, and as she wanted nothing to render her liable to the greatest temptations, so she stood in need of the surest arms for her defence against them.

But while this worthy lady was full of cares, for the well-doing of a young creature, who appear'd so deserving of regard, Miss Betsy thought she had the highest reason to be satisfied with her situation, and how, indeed, could it be otherwise?—
lady

lady Mellasin kept a great deal of company ; she received visits every morning from ten to one o'clock, from the most gay and polite of both sexes ; — all the news of the town was talked on at her levee, and it seldom happened that some party of pleasure was not formed for the ensuing evening, in all which Miss Betsy and Miss Flora had their share.

Never did the mistress of a private family indulge herself, and those about her, with such a continual round of public diversions. The court, the play, the ball, and opera, with giving and receiving visits, engross'd all the time that could be spared from the toilet. It cannot, therefore, seem strange, that Miss Betsy, to whom all these things were entirely new, should have her head turn'd with the promiscuous enjoyment, and the very power of reflection lost amidst the giddy whirl ; nor that it should be so long before she could recover it enough, to see the little true felicity of such a course of life.

Among the many topics, with which this brilliant society entertain'd each other, it may be easily supposed, that love and gallantry were not excluded. Lady Mellasin, though turn'd of forty, had her fine *things* said to her ; but both heaven and
earth

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 21

earth were ransack'd for comparisons in favour of the beauty of Miss Flora and Miss Betsy; but as there was nothing particular in these kind of addresses, and intended only to shew the wit of those that made them, these young ladies answered them only with raillery, in which art Miss Betsy soon learn'd to excel.—She had the glory, however, of being the first who excited a real passion in the heart of any of those who visited lady Mellasin; though being accusom'd to hear declarations, which had the appearance of love, yet were really no more than words of course, and made indiscriminately to every fine woman, she would not presently persuade herself, that this was more serious.

The first victim of her charms, was the only son of a very rich alderman, and having a fortune left him by a relation, independent of his father, who was the greatest miser in the world, was furnish'd with the means of mingling with the beau monde, and of making one at every diversion that was proposed.

He had fancied Miss Flora a mighty fine creature, before he saw Miss Betsy; but the imaginary flame he had for her was soon converted into a sincere one for *the other*. He truly loved her, and was almost

almost distracted at the little credit she gave to his professions. His perseverance, his tremblings whenever he approach'd her, — his transports on seeing her, — his anxieties at taking leave, so different from what she had observed in any other of those who had pretended to list themselves under the banner of her charms, at length convincing her of the conquest she had made, awaken'd in her breast that vanity so natural to a youthful mind. She exulted, — she plumed herself, — she used him ill and well by turns, taking an equal pleasure in raising, or depressing, his hopes, and, in spite of her good-nature, felt no satisfaction superior to that of the consciousness of a power of giving pain to the man who loved her; — but with how great a mortification this short-lived triumph was succeeded, the reader shall presently be made sensible.



MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 23

~~MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 23~~

C H A P. III.

Affords matter of condolance, or raillery, according to the humour the reader happens to be in for either.

WE often see, that the less encouragement is given to the lover's suit, with the more warmth and eagerness he prosecutes it; and many people are apt to ascribe this hopeless perseverance to an odd perverseness in the very nature of love; but for my part, I rather take it to proceed from an ambition of surmounting difficulties: it is not, however, my province to enter into any discussion of so nice a point; I deal only in matters of fact, and shall not meddle with definition.

It was not 'till after Miss Betsy had reason to believe she had engaged the heart of her lover too far for him to recal it, that she began to take a pride in tormenting him. While she looked on his addresses as of a piece with those who called themselves her admirers, she had treated him in that manner which she thought would most conduce to make him really
so;

so; but no sooner did she perceive, by the tokens before mentioned, and many others, that his passion was of the most serious nature, than she behaved to him in a fashion quite the reverse, especially before company; for as she had not the least affection, or even a liking towards him, his submissive deportment under the most cold, sometimes contemptuous carriage, could afford her no other satisfaction, than, as she fancied, it shewed the power of her beauty, and piqued those ladies of her acquaintance, who could not boast of such an implicit resignation, and patient suffering from their lovers; in particular Miss Flora, who she could not forbear imagining looked very grave on the occasion. What foundation there was for a conjecture of this nature was nevertheless undiscoverable 'till a long time after.

As this courtship was no secret to any of the family, Mr. Goodman thought himself obliged, both as the guardian of Miss Betsey, and the friend of alderman Saving, (for so the father of this young enamour'd was called) to enquire upon what footing it stood. He thought, that if the old man knew and approved of his son's inclinations he would have mentioned the *affair to him*, as they frequently saw each other, and it seem'd to him neither for the

the

the interest, nor reputation of his fair charge, to receive the clandestine addresses of any man whatsoever. She had a handsome fortune of her own, and he thought that, and her personal accomplishments, sufficiently to entitle her to as good a match as Mr. Saving; but then he knew the sordid nature of the alderman, and that all the merits of Miss Betsy would add nothing in the balance, if her money was found too light to poise against the sums his son would be possessed of. This being the case, he doubted not but that he was kept in ignorance of the young man's intentions, and fearing the matter might be carried too far, resolved either to put a stop to it at once, or permit it to go on, on such terms as should free him from all censure from the one or the other party.

On talking seriously to the lover, he soon found the suggestions he had entertained had not deceived him. Young Saving frankly confessed, that his father had other views for him; but added, that if he could prevail on the young lady to marry him, he did not despair but that when the thing was once done, and past recal, the alderman would by degrees, receive them into favour. "You know, Sir," said he, "that he has no child but me, nor any kindred for whom he

“ has the least regard, and it cannot be
 “ supposed he would utterly discard me
 “ for following my inclinations in this
 “ point, especially as they are in favour
 “ of the most amiable and deserving of
 “ her sex.”

He said much more on this head, but it had no weight with the merchant : — he answered, that if the alderman was of his way of thinking, all the flattering hopes his passion suggested to him, on that score, might be realized ; but that, according to the disposition he knew him to be of, he saw but little room to think he would forgive a step of this kind : — “ There-
 “ fore, continued he, I cannot allow this
 “ love-affair to be prosecuted any farther,
 “ and must desire you will desist visiting
 “ at my house, ’till you have either con-
 “ quered this inclination, or Miss Betsy is
 “ otherwise disposed of.”

This was a cruel sentence for the truly affectionate Saving ; but he found it in vain to solicit a repeal of it, and all he could obtain from him, was a promise to say nothing of what had passed to the alderman.

Mr. Goodman would have thought he *had but half* compleated his duty, had he
 neg-

neglected to sound the inclination of Miss Betsy on this account, and in order to come more easily at the truth, he began with talking to her, in a manner which might make her look on him rather as a favourer of Mr. Saving's pretensions, than the contrary, and was extremely glad to find, by her replies, how indifferent that young lover was to her. He then acquainted her with the resolution he had taken, and the discourse he had just had with him: and, to keep her from ever after encouraging the addresses of any man, without being authorised by the consent of friends on both sides, represented, in the most pathetic terms he was able, the danger to which a private correspondence renders a young woman liable. She seemed convinced of the truth of what he said, and promised to follow, in the strictest manner, his advice.

Whether she thought herself, in reality, so much obliged to the conduct of her guardian in this, I will not take upon me to say; for tho' she was not charmed with the person of Mr. Saving, it is certain she took an infinite pleasure in the assiduities of his passion: it is therefore highly probable, that she might imagine he meddled in this affair more than he had any occasion to have done. She had, however,

but little time for reflection on her guardian's behaviour, an accident happening, which shewed her own to her in a light very different from what she had ever seen it.

Lady Mellafin had a ball at her house ; — there was a great deal of company, among whom was a gentleman, named Gayland : — He was a man of family. — had a large estate, — sung, danced, spoke French, dressed well ; — frequent successes among the women had rendered him extremely vain, and as he had too great an admiration for his own person to be possessed of any great share of it for that of any other, he enjoyed the pleasures of love, without being sensible of the pains. This darling of the fair it was, that Miss Betsy picked out to treat with the most peculiar marks of esteem, whenever she had a mind to give umbrage to poor Saving : much had that faithful lover suffered on the account of this fop ; but the fair inflictor of his torments was punished for her insensibility and ingratitude, by a way her inexperience of the world, and the temper of mankind in general, had made her far from apprehending.

While the company were employed, *some in dancing, and others in particular*
con-

conversation, the beau found an opportunity to slip into Miss Betsy's hand a little billet, saying to her at the same time, " You have got my heart, and this little bit of paper will convey to you the sentiments it is inspired with in your favour." She imagining it was either a sonnet or epistle, in praise of her beauty, received it with a smile, and put it into her pocket. After every body had taken leave, and she was retired to her chamber, she examined it, and found to her great astonishment the contents as follow :

" DEAR MISS,
 " I MUST certainly be either the most ungrateful, or most consumedly dull fellow upon earth, not to have returned the advances you have been so kind to make me, had the least opportunity offered for my doing so ; but lady Mellafin, her daughter, the fool Saving, or some impertinent creature or other, has always been in the way, so that there was not a possibility of giving you even the least earnest of love ; but, my dear, I have found out of way to pay you the whole sum with interest ; — which is this : — You must invent some excuse for going out alone, and let me know by a billet, directed for me at White's, the exact hour, and I will wait for you."

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“ at the corner of the street in a hackney
 “ coach, — the window drawn up, and
 “ whirl you to a pretty snug place I know
 “ of, where we may pass a delicious hour
 “ or two, without a soul to interrupt our
 “ pleasures. Let me find a line from you
 “ to-morrow, if you can any way contrive
 “ it, being impatient to convince you
 “ how much I am,

“ My dear creature,

“ Yours, &c. &c.

J. GAYLAND.”

Impossible is it to express the mingled emotions of shame, surprize, and indignation, which filled the breast of Miss Betsey, on reading this bold invitation : — she threw the letter on the ground, she stamped upon it, she spurned it, and would have treated the author in the same manner had he been present ; but the first transports of so just a resentment being over, a consciousness of having, by a too free behaviour towards him, emboldened him to take this liberty, involved her in the utmost confusion, and she was little less enraged with herself, than she had reason to be with him. She could have tore out her very eyes, for having affected to
 look

look kindly on a wretch, who durst presume so far on her supposed affection, and tho' she spared those pretty twinklers that violence, she half drowned their lustre in a deluge of tears. Never was a night passed in more cruel anxieties than what she sustained, both from the affront she had received, and reflection, that it was chiefly the folly of her own conduct, which had brought it on her ; and what greatly added to her vexation, was the uncertainty how it would best become her to act, on an occasion which appeared so extraordinary to her. She had no friend whom she thought it proper to consult ; — she was ashamed to relate the story to any of the discreet and serious part of her acquaintance ; — she feared their reproofs for having counterfeited a tenderness for a man, which she was now sensible she ought, if it had been real, rather to have concealed with the utmost care, both from him and all the world : — and as for lady Mellasin and Miss Flora, though their conduct inspired her not with any manner of awe, yet she thought she saw something in those ladies which did not promise much sincerity, and shewed as if they would rather turn her complaints into ridicule, than afford her that cordial and friendly advice she stood in need of.

These were the reasons which determined her to keep the whole thing a secret from every one. At first she was tempted to write to Gayland, and testify her disdain of his presumption, in terms which should convince him how grossly his vanity had imposed upon him; but she afterwards considered, that a letter from her was doing him too much honour, and though never so reproachful, might draw another from him, either to excuse and beg pardon for the temerity of the former, or possibly to affront her a second time, by defending it, and repeating his request. She despised and hated him too much to engage in a correspondence with him of any kind, and therefore resolved, as it was certainly most prudent, not to let him have any thing under her hand, but when next she saw him, to shew her resentment by such ways as occasion should permit.

He came not to Mr. Goodman's, however, for three days, possibly waiting that time for a letter from Miss Betsy; but on the fourth he appeared at lady Mellasin's tea table. There were, besides the family, several others present, so that he had not an opportunity of speaking in private to *Miss Betsy*; but the looks she gave him
so

so different from all he had ever seen her assume towards him, might have shewn any man, not blinded with his vanity, how much she was offended ; but he imagining her ill humour proceeded only from the want of means to send to him, came again the next day, and happening to find her alone in the parlour, “ What “ my dear,” said he, taking her in a free manner by the hand, “ have you been so “ closely watched by your guardian and “ guardianneses here, that no kind mo- “ ment offered for you to answer the de- “ voirs of your humble servant ? ” “ The “ surest guardians of my fame and peace,” replied she, snatching her hand away, “ is “ the little share of understanding I am “ mistress of, which, I hope, will always “ be sufficient to defend my honour in “ more dangerous attacks, than the rude “ impertinencies of an idle coxcomb.”

These words, and the air with which they were spoke, one would think, should have struck with confusion the person to whom they were directed ; but Gayland was not so easily put out of countenance, and looking her full in the face,—“ Ah, “ child ! ” cried he, “ sure you are not “ in your right senses to-day : — under- “ standing, — impertinencies, — idle cox “ comb,—very pleasant i’faith ! but upo

“ my soul, if you think these airs become
“ you, you are the most mistaken woman
“ in the world.” “ It may be so,” cried
she, ready to burst with inward spite at
his insolence, “ but I should be yet more
“ mistaken, if I were capable of thinking
“ a wretch, like you, worthy of any thing
“ but contempt.” With these words she
flung out of the room, and he pursued
her with a horse laugh, ’till she was out of
hearing, and then went into the dining-
room, where he found lady Mellasin, and
several who had come to visit her.

Miss Betsy, who had gone directly to
her own chamber, sent to excuse coming
down to tea, pretending a violent head-
ach, nor would be prevailed upon to join
the company, ’till she heard Gayland had
taken his leave, which he did much sooner
than usual, being probably a good deal
disconcerted at the shock his vanity had
received.



C H A P. VI.

Verifies the old proverb, that one affliction treads upon the heels of another.

AS Miss Betsy was prevented from discovering to any one, the impudent attempt Gayland had made on her virtue, by the shame of having emboldened him to it, by too unreserved a behaviour, so also the shame of the disappointment, and rebuff he had received from her, kept him from saying any thing of what had passed between them; and this resolution, on both sides, render'd it very difficult for either of them to behave to the other, so as not to give some suspicion. Betsy could not always avoid seeing him, when he came to lady Mallasin's, for he would not all at once desist his visits, for two reasons; first, because it might give occasion for an enquiry into the cause; and secondly, because Miss Betsy would plume herself on the occasion, as having, by her scorn, triumphed over his audacity, and drove him from the field of battle. He therefore resolved to continue his visits for some time, and to pique her, as he imagined, directed all the fine things his com-

mon-place-book was well stored with, to Miss Flora, leaving the other wholly neglected.

But here he was little less deceived, than he had been before in the sentiments of that young lady: the hatred his late behaviour had given her, and the utter detestation it had excited in her towards him, had, for a time, extinguished that vanity, so almost inseparable from youth, especially when accompanied with beauty; and she rather rejoiced than the contrary, to see him affect to be so much taken up with Miss Flora, that he could scarce say the least complaisant thing to her, as it freed her from the necessity of returning it, in some measure. Her good sense had now scope to operate; — she saw, as in a mirror, her own late follies in those of Miss Flora, who swelled with all the pride of flatter'd vanity, on this new imaginary conquest over the heart of the accomplish'd Gayland, as he was generally esteemed, and perceived the errors of such a way of thinking and acting, in so clear a light, as had it continued, would, doubtless, have spared her those anxieties her relapse from it afterwards occasioned.

In these serious reflections let us leave *her*, for a time, to see in what situation
Mr.

Mr. Saving was, after being denied access to his mistress. As it was impossible for a heart to be more truly sincere and affectionate, he was far from being able to make any efforts for the banishing Miss Betsy's image thence : on the contrary, he thought of nothing but how to continue a correspondence with her, and endeavour, by all the means in his power, to engage her to a private interview. As his flame was pure and respectful, he was some days debating within himself how to proceed, so as not to let her think he had desisted from his pretensions, or to continue them in a manner at which she should not be offended. Love, when real, seldom fails of inspiring the breast that harbours it with an equal share of timidity, — he trembled whenever he thought of soliciting a meeting, yet, without it, how could he hope to retain any place in her memory, much less make any progress in gaining her affection ! at length, however, he assumed courage enough to write to her, and by a bribe to one of the servants, got his letter deliver'd to her, fearing if he had sent it by the post, or any public way to the house, it would be intercepted, by the caution he found Mr. Goodman had resolved to observe in this point.

Miss

Miss Betsy, knowing his hand by the superscription, was a little surprised, as, perhaps, having never thought of him since they parted, but open'd it without the least emotion, either of pain or pleasure :—she knew him too well to be under any apprehensions of being treated by him as she had been by Gayland, and was too little sensible of his merit to feel the least impatience for examining the dictates of his affection ; yet, indifferent as she was, she could not forbear being touch'd on reading these lines :

“ Most adored of your sex,

“ I DOUBT not but you are acquainted
 “ with Mr. Goodman’s behaviour to
 “ me ; but, oh ! I fear you are too insen-
 “ sible of the agonies, in which my soul
 “ labours, through his cruel caution. —
 “ Dreadful is the loss of sight, yet what
 “ is sight to me, when it presents not
 “ you ! — Though I saw you regardless of
 “ my ardent passion, yet still I saw you,
 “ and while I did so, could not be wholly
 “ wretched. — What have I not endured
 “ since deprived of that only joy, for
 “ which I wish to live ! — Had it not
 “ been improper for me to have been
 “ seen near Mr. Goodman’s house, after
 “ *having been forbid entrance to it, I*
 “ should

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 39

“ should have dwelt for ever in your
 “ street, in hope of sometimes getting a
 “ glimpse of you from one or other of
 “ the windows ; this I thought would be
 “ taken notice of, and might offend you :
 “ —but darkness freed me from these ap-
 “ prehensions, and gave me the consolation
 “ of breathing in the same air with you.
 “ —Soon as I thought all watchful eyes
 “ were closed, I flew to the place, which,
 “ wherever my body is, contains my
 “ heart, and all its faculties. I pleased
 “ myself with looking on the roof that
 “ covers you, and invoked every star to
 “ present me to you in your sleep, in a
 “ form more agreeable than I can hope I
 “ ever appeared in to your waking fancy.
 “ Thus I have passed each night, and
 “ when the morning dawn’d, unwillingly
 “ retired to take that rest, which nature
 “ more especially demands, when heavy
 “ melancholly oppresses the heart. I
 “ slept,— but how ? — distracting images
 “ swam in my tormented brain, and
 “ waked me with horrors inconceivable.
 “ Equally lost to business, as to all social
 “ commerce, I fly mankind, and like
 “ some discontented ghost, seek out the
 “ most solitary walks, and lonely shades,
 “ to pour forth my complaints. O Miss
 “ Betsy ! I cannot live, if longer denied
 “ *the sight of you !* — In pity to my suf-
 “ ferings,

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“ ferings, permit me yet once more to
 “ speak to you, even though it be to take
 “ a last farewell. I have made a little
 “ kind of interest with the woman at the
 “ habit-shop in Covent-Garden, where I
 “ know you sometimes go :—I dread to
 “ intreat you would call there to morrow,
 “ yet if you are so divinely good, be af-
 “ fured I shall entertain no presuming
 “ hopes on the condescension you shall be
 “ pleased to make me ; but acknowledge
 “ it as the mere effect of that compassion
 “ which is inherent to a generous mind.
 “ Alas! I must be much more worthy
 “ than I can yet pretend to be, before I
 “ dare flatter myself with owing any thing
 “ to a more soft emotion, than those I
 “ have mentioned. Accuse me not, there-
 “ fore of too much boldness in this peti-
 “ tion, but grant to my despair what you
 “ would deny to the love of

“ Your most faithful,

“ And everlasting slave,

“ H. SAVING.

“ P. S. The favour of one line to let me
 “ know whether I may expect the bles-
 “ sing I implore, will add to the bounty
 “ of it. The same hand that brings
 “ you

“ you this, will also deliver your commands to yours as above.”

Miss Betsy read this letter several times, and the oftner she did so, the more she saw into the soul of him that sent it. How wide the difference between this and that she received from Gayland! 'Tis true they both desired a meeting, each made the same request, but the manner in which the former was asked, and the end proposed by the grant of it, she easily perceived were as distant as heaven and hell. She called to mind the great respect he had always treated her with; — she was convinced both of his honour and sincerity, and thought something was due from her on that account. In fine, after deliberating a little within herself; she resolved to write to him in these terms :

“ S I R,

“ THOUGH it is my fixed determination to encourage the addresses of no man whatever, without the approbation of my guardians, yet I think myself too much obliged to the affection you have express'd for me, to refuse you a favour of so trifling a nature as that you have taken the pains to ask. I will be at the place you mention to-morrow,
“ some

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“ some time in the forenoon ; but desire
 “ you will expect nothing from it but a
 “ last farewell, which you have promised
 “ to be contented with. ’Till then,
 “ adieu.”

After finishing this little billet, she called the maid, whom Saving had made his confidante, into the chamber, and ask’d her, when she expected he would come for an answer ? To which the other replied, that he had appointed her to meet him at the corner of the street very early in the morning, before any of the windows were open. “ Well then,” said Miss Betsey smiling, and putting the letter into her hands, “ give him this. I do it for your
 “ sake, Nanny ; for, I suppose, you will
 “ have a double fee on the delivery.”
 “ The gentleman is too much in love,” answered she, “ not to be grateful.”

Miss Betsey pass’d the remainder of that day, and the ensuing night, with that tranquillity which is inseparable from a mind unincumbered with passion ; but the next morning, remembering her promise, while lady Mellasin and Miss Flora were engaged with the beaux and belles at their levee, she slipp’d out, and taking a chair at the end of the street, went to the milliner’s according to appointment. She doubted
 NOT

not but the impatience of her lover would have brought him there long before her, and was very much amazed to find herself the first comer. She knew not, however, but some extraordinary accident, unforeseen by him, might have happened to detain him longer than he expected, and from the whole course of his past behaviour, could find no shadow of reason to suspect him of a wilful remissness. She sat down in the shop, and amused herself with talking to the woman on the new modes of dress, and such like ordinary matters; but made not the least mention of the motive which had brought her there that morning: and the other, not knowing whether it would be proper to take any notice, was also silent on that occasion; but Miss Betsy observed, she often turned her head towards the window, and ran to the door, looking up and down the street, as if she expected somebody who was not yet come.

Miss Betsy could not forbear being shock'd at a disappointment, which was the last thing in the world she could have apprehended. She had, notwithstanding, the patience to wait from a little past eleven 'till near two o'clock, expecting, during every moment of that time, that he would either come, or send some excuse

for not doing so : but finding he did neither, and that it was near the hour in which Mr. Goodman usually dined, she took her leave of the woman, and went home full of agitations.

The maid, who was in the secret happening to open the door, and Miss Betty looking round, and perceiving there was nobody in hearing, said to her, “ Nanny, “ are you sure you delivered my letter “ safe into Mr. Saving’s hand ? ” “ Sure ! “ miss,” cried the wench, “ yes, as sure “ as I am alive, and he gave me a good “ queen Anne’s guinea for my trouble : — “ I have not had time since to put it up,” continued she, taking it out of her bosom, “ here it is.” “ Well, then, what did he “ say on receiving it ? ” said Miss Betsey. “ I never saw a man so transported,” replied she, “ he put it to his mouth, and “ kifs’d it with such an eagerness, I thought “ he would have devoured it.” Miss Betsey asked no further questions, but went up to her chamber to pull off her hood, not being able to know how she ought to judge of this adventure.

She was soon called down to dinner, but her mind was too much perplexed to suffer her to eat much.

She

She was extremely uneasy the whole day, for an explanation of what at present seemed so mysterious, and this gave her little less pain, than, perhaps, she would have felt had she been possess'd with an equal share of love; but in the evening her natural vivacity got the better, and not doubting but the next morning she should receive a letter with a full eclaircissement of this affair, she enjoyed the same sweet repose, as if nothing had happened to ruffle her temper.

The morning came, but brought no billet from that once obsequious lover:—the next, and three or four succeeding ones, were barren of the fruit she so much expected. What judgment could she form of an event so odd?—She could not bring herself to think Saving had taken pains to procure a rendezvous with her, on purpose to disappoint and affront her; and was not able to conceive any probable means, by which he could be prevented from writing to her. Death only she thought could be an excuse for him, and had that happened she should have heard of it. Sometimes she fancied that the maid had been treacherous; but when she consider'd, she could get nothing by being so, and that it was, on the contrary
rather

rather her interest to be sincere, she rejected that supposition. The various conjectures, which by turns came into her head, render'd her however excessively disturbed, and in a situation which deserved some share of pity, had not her pride kept her from revealing either the discontent, or the motives of it, to any one person in the world.



CHAP. V.

*Contains nothing very extraordinary, yet such things
as are highly proper to be known.*

I THINK it is generally allowed, that there are few emotions of the mind more uneasy than suspense. Not the extreme youth of Miss Betsy, not all her natural chearfulness, nor her perfect indifference for the son of alderman Saving, could enable her to throw off the vexation in which his late behaviour had involved her: Had the motive been the most mortifying of any that could be imagined to her vanity, pride, and resentment would then have come to her assistance: — she would have despised the author of the insult, and, in time, have forgot the insult itself

itself ; but the uncertainty in what manner she ought to think of the man, and this last action of his, made both dwell much longer on her mind, than otherwise they would have done. As the poet truly says,

“ When puzzling doubts the anxious bosom seize,

“ To know the worst, is some degree of ease.”

This is a maxim which will hold good, even when the strongest and most violent passions operate ; but Miss Betsy was possessed of no more than a bare curiosity, which, as she had as yet no other sensation that demanded gratification, was sufficiently painful to her.

It was about ten or twelve days that she continued to labour under this dilemma ; but, at the expiration of that time, was partly relieved from it by the following means.

Mr. Goodman happening to meet alderman Saving, with whom he had great business, upon 'Change, desired he would accompany him to an adjacent tavern : To which the other complied ; but with an air much more grave and reserved than
he

he was accustom'd to put on, with a person whom he had known for a great number of years, and was concerned with in some affairs of traffic, they went together to the ship tavern.

After having ended what they had to say to each other upon business, " Mr. Goodman, said the alderman, we have long been friends, I always thought you an honest, fair-dealing man, and am therefore very much surpris'd you should go about to put upon me in the manner you have lately done." " Put upon you sir, (cried the merchant) I know not what you mean, and am very certain I never did any thing that might call in question my integrity, either to you, or any one else." " It was great integrity, indeed," resumed the alderman with a sneer, " to endeavour to draw my only son into a clandestine marriage with the girl you have at your house." Mr. Goodman was astonished, as well he might, at this accusation, and perceiving, by some other words that the alderman let fall, that he was well acquainted with the love young Saving had profess'd for Miss Betsy, frankly related to him all that he knew of the courtship, and the method he had taken to put a stop to it. " That he was
" enough

“ enough, sir,” cried the alderman hastily,
 “ you should have told me of it. — Do
 “ you think young folks, like them,
 “ would have regarded your forbidding ?
 “ —No, no ! I’ll warrant you they would
 “ have found some way or other to come
 “ together before now, and the boy might
 “ have been ruined, if I had not been in-
 “ formed by other hands how things were
 “ carried on, and put it out of the power
 “ of any of you to impose upon me.
 “ The girl may spread her nets to catch
 “ some other woodcock, if she can ; —
 “ thanks to heaven, and my own pru-
 “ dence, my son is far enough out of her
 “ reach.”

Mr. Goodman, though one of the best
 natured men in the world, could not keep
 himself from being a little ruffled at the
 alderman’s discourse, and told him, that
 though he had been far from encouraging
 Mr. Saving’s inclinations, and should al-
 ways think it the duty of a son to con-
 sult his father in every thing he did, es-
 pecially in so material a point as that of
 marriage, yet he saw no reason for treat-
 ing Miss Betsy with contempt, as she was
 of a good family, had a very pretty for-
 tune of her own, and suitable accom-
 plishments.

“ You take a great deal of pains to set
 “ her off.” said the alderman, “ and since
 “ you married a court-lady not worth a
 “ groat, have got all the romantic idle
 “ notions of the other end of the town, as
 “ finely as if you had been bred there.
 “ A good family!—very pleasant i’ faith.
 “ Will a good family go to market?—
 “ Will it buy a joint of mutton at the
 “ butcher’s?—Or a pretty gown at the
 “ mercer’s?—Then a pretty fortune, your
 “ say;—enough it may be to squander
 “ away at cards or masquerades, for a
 “ month or two. She has suitable accom-
 “ plishments too?—yes, indeed, they are
 “ suitable ones, I believe;—I suppose she
 “ can sing, dance, and jabber a little
 “ French; but I’ll be hanged if she knows
 “ how to make a pye, or a pudding, or
 “ to teach her maid to do it.”

The reflection on lady Mellasin, in the
 beginning of this speech, so much incensed
 Mr. Goodman, that he could scarce attend
 to the latter part of it:—he forbore inter-
 rupting him, however, but as soon as he
 had done speaking, replied in terms which
 shewed his resentment. In fine, such hot
 words passed between them, as had they
 been younger men, might have produced
 worse consequence;—but the spirit of
 both

both being equally evaporated in mutual reproaches, they grew more calm, and at last talked themselves into as good harmony as ever. Mr. Goodman said, he was sorry that he had been prevailed upon, by the young man's entreaties, to keep his courtship to Miss Betsy a secret; and the alderman begged pardon in his turn, for having said any thing disrespectful of lady Mellasin.

On this they shook hands, another half pint of sherry was called for, and before they parted, the alderman acquainted Mr. Goodman, that to prevent entirely all future correspondence between his son and Miss Betsy, he had sent him to Holland some days ago, without letting him know any thing of his intentions, 'till every thing was ready for his embarkation. "I sent," said he, "the night before he was to go, his portmanteau, and what other luggage I thought he would have occasion for, to the inn where the Harwich stage puts up, and making him be called up very early in the morning, told him he must go a little way out of town with me, upon extraordinary business: — he seemed very unwilling, said he had appointed that morning to meet a gentleman, and begged I would delay the journey to the next day, or

“ even till the afternoon. What caused
“ this backwardness, I cannot imagine,
“ for I think it was impossible he could
“ know my designs on this score; but
“ whatever was in his head, I took care
“ to disappoint it :—I listened to none of
“ his excuses, nor trusted him out of my
“ sight, but forced him to go with me to
“ the coach, in which I had secured a
“ couple of places. He was horribly
“ shocked when he found where he was
“ going, and would fain have persuaded
“ me to repeal his banishment, as he cal-
“ led it :— I laughed in my sleeve, but
“ took no notice of the real motive I had
“ for sending him away, and told him,
“ there was an absolute necessity for his
“ departure ; — that I had a business of
“ the greatest importance at Rotterdam,
“ in which I could trust nobody but him-
“ self to negotiate, and that he would
“ find in his trunk letters and other
“ papers, which would instruct him how
“ to act.

“ In fine.” continued the alderman, “ I
“ went with him aboard, staid with him
“ ’till they were ready to weigh anchor,
“ then returned, and stood on the beach
“ till the ship sailed quite out of sight,
“ so that if my gentleman had a thought
“ of writing to his mistress, he had not
“ the

"the least opportunity for it." He added, that he did not altogether deceive his son, having, indeed, some affairs to transact at Rotterdam, though they were not of the mighty consequence he had pretended; but which he had, by a private letter to his agent there, ordered should be made appear as intricate and perplexing as possible, that the young gentleman's return might be delayed as long as there was any plausible excuse for detaining him, without his seeing through the reason of it.

Mr. Goodman praised the alderman's discretion in the whole conduct of this business; and to atone for having been prevailed upon to keep young Saving's secret from him, offered to make interest with a friend he had at the post-office to stop any letter that should be directed for Miss Betsy Thoughtless, by the way of Holland; "by which means," said he, "all communication between the young people will soon be put an end to; he will grow weary of writing when he receives no answers, and she of thinking of him as a lover, when she finds he ceases to tell her he is so."

The alderman was ready to hug his old friend for this proposal, which, it is certain,

tain, he made in the sincerity of his heart, for they no sooner parted, than he went to the office, and fulfilled his promise.

When he came home, in order to hinder Miss Betsy from expecting to hear any thing more of Mr. Saving, he told her he had been treated by the alderman pretty roughly, on account of the encouragement that had been given in his house to the amorous addresses had been made to her by his son ; “ and,” added he, “ the old man is so incensed
“ against him, for having a thought of
“ that kind in your favour, that he has
“ sent him beyond sea,—I know not to
“ what part ; — but it seems he is never
“ to come back, ’till he has given full as-
“ surance the liking he has for you is ut-
“ terly worn off.”

“ He might have spared himself the
“ pains,” said Miss Betsy, blushing with disdain, “ his son could have informed
“ him, how little I was inclinable to listen
“ to any thing he said on the score of love ;
“ and I myself, if he had asked me the
“ question, would have given him the
“ strongest assurances that words could
“ form, that if ever I changed my con-
“ dition, which heaven knows I am far
“ from thinking on as yet, I should
“ never

“ never be prevailed upon to do it, by
“ any merits his son was possessed of,”

Mr. Goodman congratulated her on the indifference she expressed, and told her, he hoped she would always continue in the same humour, 'till an offer which promised more satisfaction in marriage should happen to be made.

Nothing more was said on this head; but Miss Betsy, upon ruminating on what Mr. Goodman had related, easily imagined, that the day in which he had been sent away, was the same on which he had appointed to meet her, and therefore excused his not coming as a thing unavoidable; yet as she knew not the precaution his father had taken, was not so ready to forgive him for not sending a line to prevent her waiting so long for him at the habit-shop. She could not however, when she reflected on the whole tenour of his deportment to her, think it possible he should all at once become guilty of wilfully omitting, what even common good manners and decency required. She soon grew weary, however, of troubling herself about the matter, and a very few days served to make her lose even the memory of it.



C H A P. VI.

May be of some service to the ladies, especially the younger sort, if well attended to.

MISS Betſy had now no perſon that profeſſed a ſerious paſſion for her; but as ſhe had yet never ſeen the man capable of inſpiring her with the leaſt emotions of tenderneſs, ſhe was quite eaſy as to that point, and wiſhed nothing beyond what ſhe enjoyed, the pleaſure of being told ſhe was very handſome, and gallanted about by a great number of thoſe, who go by the name of very pretty fellows. Pleased with the praiſe, ſhe regarded not the condition or merits of the praiſed, and ſuffered herſelf to be treated, preſented, and 'ſquir'd about to all public places, either by the rake, the man of honour, the wit, or the fool, the married, as well as the unmarried, without diſtinction, and juſt as either fell in her way.

Such a conduct as this could not fail of laying her open to the cenſure of malicious tongues: — the agreeableneſs of her perſon, her wit, and the many accompliſhments

plishments she was mistress of, made her envied and hated, even by those who professed the greatest friendship for her. Several there were who, though they could scarce support the vexation it gave them to see her so much preferred to themselves, yet chose to be as much with her as possible, in the cruel hope of finding some fresh manner wherewith to blast her reputation.

Certain it is, that though she was as far removed, as innocence itself, from all intent or wish of committing a real ill, yet she paid too little regard to the appearances of it, and said and did many things which the actually criminal would be more cautious to avoid. Hurried by an excess of vanity, and that love of pleasure so natural to youth, she indulged herself in liberties, of which she foresaw not the consequences.

Lady Trusty, who sincerely loved her, both for her own sake, and that of her deceased mother, came more often to Mr. Goodman's than otherwise she would have done, on purpose to observe the behaviour of Miss Betsy; she had heard some accounts, which gave her great dissatisfaction; *but as she was a woman of penetrating*, she easily perceived, *that plain re-*
D 5
proof

proof was not the way to prevail on her to reclaim the errors of her conduct ; — that she must be insensibly weaned from what, at present, she took so much delight in, and brought into a different manner of living, by ways which should rather seem to flatter than check her vanity : she therefore earnestly wished to get her down with her into L———e, where she was soon going herself ; but knew not how to ask her without making the same invitation to Miss Flora, whose company she no way desired, and whose example she was sensible had very much contributed to give Miss Betsy that air of levity, which rendered her good sense almost useless to her.

This worthy lady happening to find her alone one day, (a thing not very usual) she asked, by way of sounding her inclination, if she would not be glad to see L———e again ; to which she replied, that there were many people for whom she had a very great respect, but the journey was too long to be taken merely on the score of making a short visit ; for she owned she did not like the country well enough to continue in it for any length of time.

Lady

Lady Trusty would fain have persuaded her into a better opinion of the place she was born in, and which most of her family had pass'd the greatest part of their lives in; but Miss Betsy was not to be argued into any tolerable ideas of it, and plainly told her ladyship, that what she called a happy tranquil manner of spending ones days, seemed to her little better than being buried alive.

From declaring her aversion to a country life, she ran into such extravagant encomiums on those various amusements, which London every day presented, that lady Trusty perceived it would not be without great difficulty she would be brought to a more just way of thinking: she concealed, however, as much as possible, the concern it gave her to hear her express herself in this manner, contenting herself with saying, calmly, that London was, indeed, a very agreeable place to live in, especially for young people, and the pleasures it afforded were very elegant; "but then, said she, the too frequent
 "repetition of them, may so much en-
 "gross the mind, as to take it off from
 "other objects, which ought to have their
 "share in it: besides, continued she,
 "*there are but too frequent proofs, that*

“ an innate principle of virtue is not al-
 “ ways a sufficient guard against the many
 “ snares laid for it, under the shew of in-
 “ nocent pleasures, by wicked and design-
 “ ing persons of both sexes ; nor can be
 “ esteem’d prudence to run ones self into
 “ dangers merely to shew our strength in
 “ overcoming them ; nor, perhaps, would
 “ even the victory turn always to our
 “ glory ; the world is censorious, and
 “ seldom ready to put the best construc-
 “ tion on things ; so that reputation may
 “ suffer, though virtue triumphs.”

Miss Betsey listened to all this with a
 good deal of attention, — the impudent
 attempt Gayland had made on her, came
 fresh into her mind, and made this lady’s
 remonstrances sink the deeper into it.
 The power of reflection being a little
 awakened in her, some freedoms also, not
 altogether consistent with strict modesty,
 which others had offer’d to her, convinced
 her of the error of maintaining too little
 reserve ; she thank’d her kind adviser, and
 promised to observe the precepts she had
 given.

Lady Trusty, finding this good effect
 of what she had said, ventur’d to proceed
 so far as to give some hints, that the
 conduct of Miss Flora had been far from
 blame-

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 61

blameless ; and therefore, pursued she, I should be glad, methinks, to see you separated from that young lady, though it were but for a small time ; and then gave her to understand, how great a pleasure it would be to her, to get her down with her to L——e, if it could be any way contrived, that she should go without Miss Flora.

“ As I have been so long from home,
“ (said she) I know I shall have all the
“ gentry round the country to welcome
“ me at the return, and if you should
“ find the company less polite, than those
“ you leave behind, it will, at least, diversify the scene, and render the entertainments of London new to you a second time, when you come back.”

Miss Betsy found in herself a strong inclination to comply with this proposal, and told lady Trusty, she should think herself happy in passing the whole summer with her ; and as to Miss Flora, the same offer might be made to her, without any danger of her accepting it. “ I am not of your
“ opinion, said the other ; the girl has no
“ fortune, but what Mr. Goodman shall
“ be pleased to give her ; which cannot
“ be very considerable, as he has a nephew
“ *in the East-Indies*, whom he is extremely
“ fond

“ fond of, and will make his heir. Lady
 “ Mellasin would, therefore, catch at the
 “ opportunity of sending her daughter to
 “ a place where there are so many gentle-
 “ men of estates, among whom she might
 “ have a better chance for getting a hus-
 “ band, than she can have in London,
 “ where her character would scarce entitle
 “ her to such a hope. I will, however,
 “ (pursued she) run the risque, and chose
 “ rather to have a guest whose company
 “ I do not so well approve of, than be de-
 “ prived of one I so much value.

Miss Betsey testified the sense she had of
 her ladyship's goodness, in the most grate-
 ful and obliging terms, and lady Mellasin
 and Miss Flora coming home soon after,
 lady Trusty said, she was come on purpose
 to ask permission for Miss Flora and Miss
 Betsey to pass two or three months with her
 down in L——c.

Lady Mellasin, as the other had ima-
 gined, seemed extremely pleased with the
 invitation, and told her, she did her daugh-
 ter a great deal of honour, and she would
 take care things should be prepared for
 both the young ladies to attend her, on her
 setting out. Lady Trusty then told her,
she had fixed the day for it, which was
about a fortnight after this conversation,
 and

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and some other matters relating to the journey being regulated, took her leave, highly pleased with the thoughts of getting Miss Betsy a place, where she should have an opportunity of using her utmost endeavours to improve the good she found in her disposition, and of weaning her, by degrees, from any ill habits she might have contracted in that Babel of mixed company she was accustomed to at Lady Mellasin's.



C H A P. VII.

Is a medley of various particulars, which pave the way for matters of more consequence.

MISS Flora had now nothing in her head, but the many hearts she expected to captivate, when she should arrive in L———e; and Lady Mellasin, who soothed her in all her vanities, resolved to spare nothing which she imagined would contribute to that purpose. Miss Betsy, who had the same ambition, though for different ends, made it also pretty much her study to set off, to the best advantage, the charms she had received from nature. The important article of dress now engrossed

grossed the whole conversation of these ladies. The day after that in which lady Trusty had made the invitation to the two young ones, Lady Mellasin went with them to the mercer's to buy some silks; she pitched on a very genteel new-fashioned pattern for her daughter; but chose one for Miss Betsy, which, though rich, seemed to her not well fancied; she testified her disapprobation, but lady Mellasin said so much in the praise of it, and the mercer, either to please her, or because he was desirous of getting it sold, assured Miss Betsy that it was admired by every body, that it was the newest thing he had in his shop, and had already sold several pieces to ladies of the first quality: all this did not argue Miss Betsy into a liking of it; yet between them she was overperswaded to have it. When these purchases were made, they went home, only stopped at the mantua maker's in their way, to order her to come that afternoon; lady Mellasin did no more than set them down, and then went on in the coach to make a visit.

The young ladies fell to reviewing their silks; but Miss Betsy was no way satisfied with her's: the more she looked upon it, the worse it appeared to her. "I shall *never* wear it with any pleasure, said she; I wish the man had it in his shop
" again.

“ again, for I think it quite ugly.” Miss Flora told her, that she wondered at her, that the thing was perfectly handsome, and that my Lady’s judgment was never before called in question. “ That may be,” replied Miss Betsy ; but certainly every one ought to please their own fancy in the choice of their cloaths ; for my part, I shall never endure to see myself in it.” Not when their fancy happens to differ from that of those who know better than themselves what is fit for them, cried Miss Flora ; and besides, have the power over them.” She spoke this with so much pertness, that Miss Betsy, who had a violent spirit, was highly provoked. “ Power over them ! cried she, I do not know what you mean, Miss Flora ; Mr. Goodman is one of my guardians indeed ; but I don’t know why that should entitle his lady to direct me in what I shall wear.”

Mr. Goodman, who happened to be looking over some papers in a little closet he had within his parlour, hearing part of this dispute, and finding it was like to grow pretty warm, came out, in hopes of moderating it.” On hearing Miss Betsy’s complaint, he desired to see the silk ; which being shewn him, “ I do not pretend,” said he, to much understanding in these things ; but, methinks, it is very hand-
some

“ some.” “ It would do well enough for
 “ winter, Sir, replied Miss Betsy ; but it
 “ is too hot and heavy for summer ; be-
 “ sides, it is so thick and clumsy, it would
 “ make me look as big again as I am :
 “ I’ll not wear it, I am resolved, in the
 “ country, whatever I do when I come to
 “ town, in the dark weather.”

“ Well, said Mr. Goodman, I will
 “ speak to my Lady to get it changed
 “ for something else.” “ Indeed, Sir,
 “ cried Miss Flora, I am sure my mamma
 “ will do no such thing, and take it very
 “ ill to hear it proposed.” You need not
 “ put yourself in any heat, replied Miss
 “ Betsy, I don’t desire she should be
 “ troubled any farther about it ; but, Sir,”
 continued she, turning to Mr. Goodman,
 “ I think I am now at an age capable of
 “ choosing for myself, in the article of
 “ dress ; and as it has been settled between
 “ you and Sir Ralph Trusty, that out of
 “ the income of my fortune, thirty pounds
 “ a year should be allowed for my board,
 “ twenty pounds for my pocket expences,
 “ and fifty for my cloaths, I think I ought
 “ to have the two latter entirely at my own
 “ disposal, and to lay it out as I think fit,
 “ and not be obliged, like a charity child,
 “ to wear whatever livery my benefactor
 “ shall be pleased to order.” She spoke
 this

this with so much spleen, that Mr. Goodman was a little nettled at it, and told her, that what his wife had done was out of kindness and good-will- which since she did not take as it was meant, she should have her money to do with as she would.

“ That is all I desire, answered she,
 “ therefore be pleased to let me have
 “ twenty guineas now, or, if there does not
 “ remain so much in your hands, I will
 “ ask Sir Ralph to advance it, and you
 “ may return it to him when you settle ac-
 “ counts.” “ No, no, (cried the mer-
 chant hastily) “ I see no reason to trouble
 “ my good friend, Sir Ralph, on such a
 “ frivolous matter. You shall have the
 “ sum you mention, Miss Betsy, whether
 “ so much remains out of the hundred
 “ pounds a year set apart for your sub-
 “ sistence, or not, as I can but deduct it
 “ out of the next payment; but I would
 “ have you manage with discretion, for
 “ you may depend, that the surplus of
 “ what was at first agreed upon, shall not
 “ be broke into, but laid up to increase
 “ your fortune, which, by the time you
 “ come of age, I hope, will be pretty
 “ handsomely improved.”

Miss Betsy then assured him, that she
doubted not of his zeal for her interest, and
hoped

hoped she had not offended him in any thing she had said. "No, no," replied he, "I always make allowances for the little impatiencies of persons of your sex and age, especially when dress is concerned." In speaking these words he opened his bureau, and took out twenty guineas, which he immediately gave her, making her first sign a memorandum of it. Miss Flora was all on fire to have offered something in opposition to this, but durst not do it, and the mantua-maker that instant coming in, she went up stairs with her into her chamber, leaving Miss Betsey and Mr. Goodman together; the former of whom, being eager to go about what she intended, ordered a hackney coach to be called, and taking the silk with her, went directly to the shop where it was bought.

The mercer at first seemed unwilling to take it again; but on her telling him, she would always make use of him for every thing she wanted in his way, and would then buy two suits of him, he at last consented. As she was extremely curious in every thing relating to her shape, she made choice of a pink-coloured French lustring, to the end, that the plaits lying flat, would *show the beauty* of her waist to more advantage; and to atone for the slightness
of

of the silk, purchased as much of it as would flounce the sleeves and the petticoat from top to bottom: she made the mercer also cut off a sufficient quantity of a rich green Venetian satin, to make her a riding-habit; and as she came home bought a silver trimming for it of Point D'Espagne; all which, with the silk she disliked in exchange, did not amount to the money she had received from Mr. Goodman.

On her return, she asked the footman, who opened the door, if the mantua-maker was gone; but he not being able to inform her, she ran hastily up stairs, to Miss Flora's chamber, which, indeed, was also her own; for they lay together: she was about to bounce in, but found the door was locked, and the key taken out on the inside. This very much surprised her, especially as she thought she had heard Miss Flora's voice, as she was at the top of the stair-case: wanting, therefore, to be satisfied who was with her, she went as softly as she could into Lady Mellasin's dressing room, which was parted from the chamber but by a slight wainscoat: she put her ear close to the pannel, in order to discover the voices of them that spoke, and finding, by some light that came through a crack or flaw in the boards, her
eyes

eyes, as well as ears, contributed to a discovery she little expected. In fine, she plainly perceived Miss Flora and a man rise off the bed ; she could not at first discern who he was, but, on his returning to go out of the room, knew him to be no other than Gayland. They went out of the chamber together as gently as they could ; and though Miss Betsey might, by taking three steps, have met them in the passage, and have had an opportunity of revenging herself on Miss Flora for the late airs she had given herself, by shewing how near she was to the scene of infamy she had been acting ; yet the shock she felt herself, on being witness of it, kept her immoveable for some time, and she suffered them to depart without the mortification of thinking any one knew of their being together in the manner they were.

This young lady, who though, as I have already taken notice, was of too volatile and gay a disposition, hated any thing that had the least tincture of indecency, was so much disconcerted at the discovery she had made, that she had not power to stir from the place she was in, much less to resolve how to behave in this *affair* ; that is, whether it would be best, or not, to let Miss Flora know she was in
the

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the secret of her shame, or to suffer her to think herself secure.

She was, however, beginning to meditate on this point, when she heard Miss Flora come up stairs, calling at every step, "Miss Betsy!—Miss Betsy!—where are you?" Gayland was gone, and his young mistress being told Miss Betsy was come home, guessed it was she who had given an interruption to their pleasures, by coming to the door; she, therefore, as she could not imagine her so perfectly convinced, contrived to disguise the whole, and worst of the truth, by revealing a part of it; and as soon as she had found her, "Lord, Miss Betsy!" cried she, with an unparalleled assurance, "where have you been?—how do you think I have been served by that cursed toad Gayland? he came up into our chamber, where the mantua-maker and I were, and as soon as she was gone, locked the door, and began to kiss and touse me so, that I protest I was frightened almost out of my wits. The devil meant no harm, though, I believe, for I got rid of him easy enough; but I wish you had rapp'd heartily at the door, and oblig'd him to open it, that we both might have rated him for his impudence." "Some people have a great deal of impudence," in-

“indeed,” replied Miss Betsey, astonished at her manner of bearing it off.” “Aye; so they have, my dear,” rejoined the other with a careless air; “but, prithee, where have you been rambling by yourself?” “No farther than Bedford-street, answered Miss Betsey: you may see on what errand,” continued she, pointing to the silks which she had laid down on a chair. Miss Flora presently ran to the bundle, examined what it contained, and either being in a better humour, or affecting to be so, than when they talked on this head in the parlour, testified no disapprobation of what she had done; but, on the contrary, talked to her in such soft obliging terms, that Miss Betsey, who had a great deal of good-nature, when not provoked by any thing that seemed an affront to herself, could not find in her heart to say any thing to give her confusion.

When Lady Mellasin came home, and was informed how Miss Betsey had behaved, in relation to the silk, she at first put on an air full of resentment; but finding the other wanted neither wit nor spirit to defend her own cause, and not caring to break with her, especially as her daughter *was going with her to L———e*, soon grew more moderate, and, at length, affected

affected to think no more of it. Certain it is, however, that this affair, silly as it was, and, as one would think, insignificant in itself, lay broiling in the minds of both mother and daughter, and they waited only for an opportunity of venting their spite, in such a manner, as should not make them appear to have the least tincture of so foul and mean a passion; but as neither of them were capable of a sincere friendship, and had no real regard for any one besides themselves, their displeasure was of little consequence.

Preparations for the journey of the young ladies, seemed, for the present, to employ all their thoughts, and diligence enough was used to get every thing ready against the time prefixed, which wanted but three days of being expired, when an unforeseen accident put an entire stop to it.

Miss Betsy received a letter from her brother Mr. Francis Thoughtless, accompanied with another to Mr. Goodman, acquainting them, that he had obtained leave from the head of the college, to pass a month in London; that he should set out from Oxford in two days, and hoped to enjoy the satisfaction of being with them in twelve hours after this letter. What

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could she now do? it would have been a sin, not only against natural affection, but against the rules of common good manners, to have left the town, either on the news of his arrival, or immediately after it; nor could lady Trufty expect, or desire she should entertain a thought of doing so; she was too wise and too good not to consider the interest of families very much depended on the strict union among the branches of it; and that the natural affection between brothers and sisters, could not be too much cultivated. Far, therefore, from insisting on the promise Miss Betsey had made of going with her into the country, she congratulated her on the happy disappointment, and told her, that she should receive her with a double satisfaction, if, after Mr. Francis returned to Oxford, she would come and pass what then remained of the summer-season with her. This, Miss Betsey assured her ladyship, she would do; so that, according to all appearance, the benefits she might have received, by being under the eye of so excellent an instructress, were but delayed, not lost.



C H A P. VIII.

Relates how by a concurrence of odd circumstances, Miss Betsy was brought pretty near the crisis of her fate, and the means by which she escaped.

MR. Francis Thoughtless arrived in town the very evening before the day in which Sir Ralph Trusty and his lady were to set out for L——e. They had not seen this young gentleman since the melancholy occasion of his father's funeral, and would have been glad to have spent some time with him ; but could no way put off their journey, as word was sent of the day in which they expected to be at home : Sir Ralph knew very well, that a great number of his tenants, and friends, would meet him on the road, and a letter would not reach them soon enough to prevent them from being disappointed : they supped with him, however, at Mr. Goodman's, who would not permit him to have any other home than his house, during his stay in town. Lady Trusty, on taking leave of Miss Betsy, said to her, she hoped she would remember her promise when her brother was returned to Oxford ; on

which she replied, that she could not be so much an enemy to her own happiness as to fail.

Miss Betsey and this brother had been always extremely fond of each other, and the length of time they had been asunder, and the improvement which that time had made in both, heightened their mutual satisfaction in meeting.

All that troubled Miss Betsey now, was, that her brother happened to come to London at a season of the year, in which he could not receive the least satisfaction; the king was gone to Hanover, all the foreign ministers, and great part of the nobility attended him; and the rest were retired to their country seats; so that an entire stop was put to all public diversions worth seeing. There were no plays, no operas, no masquerades, no balls, no public shews, except at the little theatre in the Hay-market, then known by the name of F——g's scandal-shop; because he frequently exhibited there certain drolls, or, more properly, invectives against the ministry: in doing which it appears extremely probable, that he had two views; the one to get money, which he very much wanted, from such as delighted *in low humour*, and could not distinguish
true

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true satire from scurrility ; and the other, in the hope of having some post given him by those whom he had abused, in order to silence his dramatic talent. But it is not my business to point out either the merit of that gentleman's performances, or the motives he had for writing them, as the town is perfectly acquainted both with his abilities and success ; and has since seen him, with astonishment, wriggle himself into favour, by pretending to cajole those he had not the power to intimidate.

But though there were none of the diversions I have mentioned, nor Ranelagh at that time thought of, nor Vauxhall, Marylebone, nor Cuper's Garden's, in the repute they since have been, the young gentleman found sufficient to entertain him ; empty as the town was, lady Mellasin was not without company, who made frequent parties of pleasure, and when nothing else was to be found for recreation, cards filled up the void.

Nothing material enough to be inserted in this history happened to Miss Betsy, during the time her brother staid, 'till one evening, as the family were sitting together, some discourse concerning Oxford coming on the tapis, Mr. Francis spoke so largely

largely in the praise of the wholesomeness of the air, the many fine walks and gardens with which the place abounded, and the good company which were continually resorting to it, that Miss Betsey cried out, she longed to see it, —Miss Flora said the same.

On this the young gentleman gave them an invitation to go down with him, when he went, saying, they never could go at a better time, as both the assizes and races were to be in about a month. Miss Betsey said, such a jaunt would vastly delight her. Miss Flora echoed her approbation, and added, she wished my lady would consent. “ I have no objection to make to it, replied “ lady Mellasin, as you will have a con- “ ductor, who, I know, will be very care- “ ful of you.” Mr. Goodman’s consent was also asked, for the sake of form, tho’ every one knew the opinion of his wife was, of itself, a sufficient sanction.

Though it is highly probable, that Miss Betsey was much better pleased with this journey, than she would have been with that to L———e, yet she thought herself obliged, both in gratitude and good manners, to write to Lady Trusty, and *make the best excuse she could for her breach*

breach of promise, which she did in these terms.

To Lady TRUSTY.

“ Most dear and honoured Madam,

“ MY brother Frank being extremely
 “ desirous of shewing Miss Flora and
 “ myself the curiosities of Oxford, has
 “ obtained leave from Mr. Goodman, and
 “ lady Mellasin, for us to accompany him
 “ to that place. I am afraid the season
 “ will be too far advanced, for us to take
 “ a journey to L———e at our return ;
 “ therefore flatter myself your Ladyship
 “ will pardon the indispensable necessity I
 “ am under of deferring, ’till next spring,
 “ the happiness I proposed in waiting on
 “ you. All here present my worthy guar-
 “ dian, and your ladyship, with their best
 “ respects. I beg mine may be equally ac-
 “ ceptable, and that you will always con-
 “ tinue to favour with your good wishes,
 “ her, who is,

“ With the most perfect esteem,

“ Madam,

Your Ladyship’s most obliged,

“ And most obedient servant,

“ E. THOUGHTLESS.”

The time for the young gentleman's departure being arrived, they went together in the stage, attended by a footman of Mr. Goodman's, whom Lady Mellasin would needs send with them, in order to give the young ladies an air of dignity.

They found, on their arrival at that justly celebrated seat of learning, that Mr. Francis had given no greater eulogiums on it, than it merited : they were charmed with the fine library, the musæum, the magnificence of the halls belonging to the several colleges, the physic-garden, and other curious walks; but that which above all the rest gave the most satisfaction to Miss Betsey, as well as to her companion, was that respectful gallantry with which they found themselves treated, by the gentlemen of the University. Mr. Francis was extremely beloved amongst them, on account of his affability, politeness, and good humour, and they seemed glad of an opportunity of shewing the regard they had for the brother, by paying all manner of civilities to the sister; he gave the ladies an elegant entertainment at his own rooms, to which also some of those with whom he was the most intimate were invited. All these thought themselves bound to return the same compliment: the company

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pany of every one present were desired at their respective apartments ; and as each of these gentlemen had, besides other particular friends of their own, whom they wished to oblige, the number of guests were still increased at every feast.

By this means, Miss Betsy and Miss Flora soon acquired a very large acquaintance, and as through the care of Mr. Francis, they were lodged in one of the best and most reputable houses in town, their families known, and themselves were young ladies who knew how to behave as well as dress, and receive company in the most elegant and polite manner, every one was proud of a pretence for visiting them.

The respect paid to them would doubtless have every day increased, during the whole time they should have thought proper to continue in Oxford, and on quitting it have left behind them the highest idea of their merit, if, by one inconsiderate action, they had not at once forfeited the esteem they had gained, and rendered themselves the subjects of ridicule, even to those who before had regarded them with veneration.

They were walking out one day, about
an hour or two before the time in which
E 5 *they*

they usually dined, into the park, where they were met by a gentleman commoner, and a young student, both of whom they had been in company with at most of the entertainments beforemention'd. The sparks begged leave to attend them, which was readily granted, they walked all together for some time: but the weather being very warm, the gentleman-commoner took an occasion to remind the ladies how much their beauties would be in danger of suffering from the immoderate rays of phœbus, and propos'd going to some gardens full of the most beautiful alcoves and arbours, so shaded over, that the sun, even in his meridian force, could, at the most, but glimmer through the delightful gloom: he painted the pleasures of the place, to which he was desirous of leading them, with so romantic an energy, that they immediately, and without the least scruple or hesitation, consented to be conducted thither.

This was a condescension, which he, who ask'd it, scarce expected would be granted, and, on finding it so easily obtain'd, began to form some conjectures no way to the advantage of those ladies reputations. It is certain, indeed that as he profess'd a friendship for the brother, he might not, in strict honour, to have propos'd

posed any thing to the sister, which would be unbecoming her to agree to; but he was young, gay to an excess, and in what he said or did, took not always consideration for his guide.

They went on laughing 'till they came to the place he mention'd where the gentlemen having shew'd their fair companions into the gardens, in which were, indeed, several recesses, no less dark than had been described: on entering one of them Miss Betsy cried, " Bless me! this is fit for
 " nothing but for people to do what they
 " are ashamed of in the light." " The
 " fitter then, madam," replied the gentleman commoner, " to encourage a lover,
 " who, perhaps has suffered more through
 " his own timidity, than the cruelty of
 " the object he adores." He accompanied these words with a seizure of both her hands, and two or three kisses on her lips. The young student was no less free with Miss Flora; but neither of these ladies gave themselves the trouble to reflect what consequences might possibly attend a prelude of this nature, and repulsed the liberties they took in such a manner, as made the offenders imagine they had not sinned beyond a pardon.

They would not, however, be prevailed on to stay, or even to sit down in that darksome recess, but went into a house, where they were shewn into a very pleasant room, which commanded the whole prospect of the garden, and was sufficiently shaded from the sun by jessamin and honey suckles, which grew against the windows: here wine, cakes, jellies, and such like things being brought, the conversation was extremely lively, and full of gallantry, without the least mixture of indecency.

The gentlemen exerted all their wit and eloquence, to persuade the ladies not to go home in the heat of the day; but take up with such entertainment as the place they were in was able to present them with. Neither of them made any objection, except that having said they should dine at home, the family would wait in expectation of their coming; but this difficulty was easily got over: the footman, who had attended Miss Betty and Miss Flora, in their morning's walk, was in the house, and might be sent to acquaint the people, that they were not to expect them. As they were neither displeased *with the company*, nor place they were in, *they needed not abundance of persuasions,*
and

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 85

and the servant was immediately dispatched. The gentlemen went out of the room, to give orders for having something prepared, but staid not two minutes ; and, on their return omitted nothing that might keep up the good humour and sprightliness of their fair companions.

Persons of so gay and volatile a disposition, as these four, could not content themselves with sitting still, and barely talking,—every limb must be in motion,—every faculty employed. The gentleman-commoner took Miss Betsy's hand, and led her some steps of a minuet, then fell into a rigadoon, then into the loup, and so ran through all the school-dances, without regularly beginning or ending any one of them, or of the tunes he sung : the young student was not less alert with Miss Flora ; so that between singing, dancing, and laughing, they all grew extremely warm. Miss Betsy ran to a window to take breath, and get a little air ; her partner followed, and taking up her fan, which lay on a table, employ'd it with a great deal of dexterity, to assist the wind that came in at the casement for her refreshment. “ Heaven ! (cried he) “ how divinely lovely do you now appear ? the goddess of the spring, nor “ Venus's self, was ever painted half so “ beautiful

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“ beautiful. What eyes!—what a mouth!
 “ — and what a shape!” continued he,
 surveying her, as it were, from head to
 foot, “ how exquisitely turned!—how
 “ taper!—how slender!—I don’t believe
 “ you measure half a yard round the
 “ waist.” In speaking these words he
 put his handkerchief about her waist, after
 which he tied it round his head, repeating
 these lines of Mr. Waller’s :

“ That which her slender waist confin’d
 “ Shall now my joyful temples bind ;
 “ No monarch but would give his crown,
 “ His arms might do what this has done,”

“ O fie upon it,” said Miss Betsy,
 laughing, and snatching it from his head,
 “ this poetry is stale, I should rather have
 “ expected from an Oxonian, some fine
 “ thing of his own extempore, on this oc-
 “ sion, which, perhaps, I might have been
 “ vain enough to have got printed in the
 “ monthly Magazines.”

“ Ah! madam,” replied he, looking on
 her with dying languishments, “ where
 “ the heart is deeply affected, the brain
 “ seldom produces any thing, but incon-
 “ gruous ideas. Had Sacarissa been mis-
 “ tress

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 87

“ tress of the charms you are, or had
“ Waller loved like me, he had been less
“ capable of writing in the manner he
“ did.”

The student perceiving his friend was entering into a particular conversation with Miss Betsy, found means to draw Miss Flora out of the room, and left them together, though this young lady afterwards protested she called to Miss Betsy to follow ; but if she did, it was in such a low voice that the other did not hear her, and continued her pleasantry, rallying the gentleman-commoner on every thing he said, 'till he finding the opportunity he had of being revenged, soon turned his humble adoration into an air more free and natural to him. As she was opening her mouth to utter some sarcasm or other, he caught her in his arms, and began to kiss her with so much warm and eagerness that surprised her ; she struggled to get loose, and called Miss Flora, not knowing she was gone, to come to her assistance. The efforts she made at first to oblige him to desist, were not, however, quite so strenuous as they ought to have been on such an occasion ; but finding he was about to proceed to greater liberties than any man before *had ever taken with her*, she collected all *her strength*, and broke from him, when
looking

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looking round the room, and seeing nobody there, " Bless, me, cried she, what " is the meaning of all this ?—where are " our friends ?" " They are gone (said he) " to pay the debt, which love, and " youth, and beauty challenge ; let us not " be remiss, nor waste the precious moments in idle scruples. Come, my " angel !" pursued he, endeavouring to get her once more into his arms, " make " me the happiest of mankind, and be as " divinely good as you are fair."

" I do not understand you, sir, replied " she, but neither desire nor will stay to " hear an explanation." She spoke this with somewhat of an haughty air, and was making towards the door ; but he was far from being intimidated, and instead of suffering her to pass, he seized her a little roughly with one hand, and with the other made fast the door ; " Come, come, my " dear creature, cried he, no more resistance, you see you are in my power, " and the very name of being so, is sufficient to absolve you to yourself, for " any act of kindness you may bestow " upon me ; be generous then, and be assured it shall be an inviolable secret."

She was about to say something, but he stopped her mouth with kisses, and forced her

her to sit down in a chair, where holding her fast, her ruin had certainly been completed, if a loud knocking at the door had not prevented him from prosecuting his design.

This was the brother of Miss Betsy, who having been at her lodgings, on his coming from thence met the footman, who had been sent to acquaint the family the ladies would not dine at home : he asked where his sister was, and the fellow having told him, came directly to the place. A waiter of the house shewed him to the room ; on finding it locked he was strangely amazed, and both knocked and called to have it opened, with a good deal of vehemence.

The gentleman-commoner knowing his voice, was shocked to the last degree ; but quitted that instant his intended prey, and let him enter. Mr. Francis, on coming in, knew not what to think ; he saw the gentleman in great disorder, and his sister in much more. “ What is the meaning of this, said he ? ” Sister, how came you here ? ” “ Ask me no questions at present,” replied she, scarce able to speak, so strangely had her late fright seized on her spirits, “ but see me safe from this cursed house, and that worst of men.” Her speaking in this manner made Mr. Francis

Francis apprehend the whole, and perhaps more than the truth. "How, sir," said he, darting a furious look at the gentleman-commoner, "what is it I hear? — "have you dared to — ?" Whatever I "have dared to, interrupted the other, I "am capable of defending." 'Tis well," rejoined the brother of Miss Betsy, "perhaps I may put you to the trial; but "this is not a time or place." He then took hold of his sister's hand, and led her down stairs; as they were going out, Miss Betsy stopping a little to adjust her dress, which was strangely disordered, she bethought herself of Miss Flora, who though she was very angry with, she did not chuse to leave behind at the mercy of such rakes, as she had reason to think those were, whom she had been in company with. Just as she was desiring her brother to send a waiter in search of that young lady, they saw her coming out of the garden, led by the young student, who, as soon as he beheld Mr. Francis, cried, "Ha! Frank, how came you "here? you look out of humour." "How I came here, it matters not, replied he sullenly; "and as to my being "out of humour, perhaps you may know "better than I yet do, what cause I have "for being so."

He waited for no answer to these words, but conducted his sister out of the house as hastily as he could : Miss Flora followed, after having taken leave of her companion in what manner she thought proper.

On their coming home, Miss Betsy related to her brother, as far as her modesty would permit, all the particulars of the adventure, and ended with saying, that sure it was heaven alone that gave her strength to prevent the perpetration of the villain's intentions. Mr. Francis, all the time she was speaking, bit his lips, and shewed great tokens of an extraordinary disturbance in his mind ; but offered not the least interruption. When he perceived she had done, " Well, sister, said he, I shall hear what he has to say, and will endeavour to oblige him to ask your pardon ;" and soon after took his leave.

Miss Betsy did not very well comprehend his meaning in these words, and was, indeed, still in too much confusion to consider on any thing ; but what the consequences were of this transaction, the reader will presently be informed of.



C H A P. IX.

Contains such things as might be reasonably expected, after the preceding adventure.

WHEN, in any thing irregular, and liable to censure, more persons than one are concerned, how natural is it for each to accuse the other, and it often happens, in this case, that the greatest part of the blame falls on the least culpable.

After Mr. Francis had left the ladies, in order to be more fully convinced in this matter, and to take such measures as he thought would best become him for the reparation of the affront offered to the honour of his family, Miss Flora began to reproach Miss Betsey, for having related any thing of what had passed to her brother: "By your own account, said she, "no harm was done to you; but some people love to make a bustle about nothing." And some people, replied Miss Betsey, tartly, love nothing but the gratification of their own passions, and having no sense of virtue and modesty themselves, can have no regard to
"that

“that of another.” “What do you
 “mean, Miss?” cried the other with a
 “pert air. “My meaning is pretty plain,
 “rejoined Miss Betsy; but since you affect
 “so much ignorance, I must tell you, that
 “the expectations of a second edition of
 “the same work Mr. Gayland had helped
 “you to compose, though from another
 “quarter, tempted you to sneak out of
 “the room, and leave your friend in
 “danger of falling a sacrifice to what her
 “soul most detests and scorns.” These
 words stung Miss Flora to the quick; her
 face was in an instant covered with a
 scarlet blush, and every feature betrayed
 the confusion of her mind; but recovering
 herself from it, much sooner than most
 others of her age could have done: “Good
 “lack, cried she, I fancy you are setting
 “up for a prude; but pray, how came
 “Mr. Gayland into your head?—What,
 “because I told you he innocently
 “romped with me one day in the cham-
 “ber, are you so censorious as to infer
 “any thing criminal passed between us?”
 “Whatever I infer,” replied Miss Betsy
 disdainfully, “I have better vouchers for
 “the truth of, than your report, and
 “would advise you, when you go home,
 “to get the chink in the pannel of the
 “wainscot of my lady’s dressing-room
 “stopp’d up, or your next rendezvous
 “with

“ with that gentleman, may possibly have
 “ witnesses of more ill-nature than my-
 “ self.” “ That can scarcely be,” said
 Miss Flora, ready to burst with vexation ;
 “ but don’t think I value your little ma-
 “ lice ; you are only angry because he
 “ slighted the advances you made him,
 “ and took all opportunities to shew how
 “ much his heart and judgment gave the
 “ preference to me.” These words so
 piqued the vanity of Miss Betsy, that not
 able to bear she should continue in the
 imagination of being better liked than her-
 self, though even by the man she hated,
 told her the solicitations he had made to
 her, the letter she had received from him,
 and the rebuff she had given him upon it ;
 “ so that, pursued she, it was not ’till
 “ after he found there was no hope of
 “ gaining me, that he carried his devoirs
 “ to you.”

Miss Flora was more nettled at this
 éclaircissement than she was at the disco-
 very she now perceived the other had
 made of her intrigue : she pretended,
 however, not to believe a word of what
 she had said ; but willing to evade all far-
 ther discourse on that head, returned to
 the adventure they had just gone through
 with the Oxonians. “ Never expect,
 “ said she, to pass it upon any one of
 “ common

“ common sense, that if you had not a
 “ mind to have been alone with that ter-
 “ rible man, as you now describe him,
 “ you would have staid in the room after
 “ I was gone, and called to you to fol-
 “ low.”

It was in vain that Miss Betsy denied she either heard her speak, or knew any thing of her departure, 'till some time after she was gone, and the gentleman-commoner began to use her with such familiarities as convinced her he was sensible no witnesses were present. This, though no more than truth, was of no consequence to her justification, to one determined to believe the worst, or at least, seem to do so: Miss Flora treated with contempt all she said on this score, derided her imprecations, and to mortify her the more, said to her, in a taunting manner: “ Come, come, Miss Betsy, 'tis a folly to
 “ think to impose upon the world by
 “ such shallow artifices: — what your in-
 “ clinations are is evident enough; any
 “ one may see, that if it had not been for
 “ your brother's unseasonable interruption,
 “ nobody would ever have heard a word
 “ of these insults you now so heavily
 “ complain of.”

Poor Miss Betsey could not refrain letting fall some tears at so unjust and cruel an inuendo ; but the greatness of her spirit enabled her in a few moments to overcome the shock it had given her : she returned reproaches with reproaches, and as she had infinitely more of truth and reason on her side, had also much the better in this combat of tongues, nevertheless the other would not give out ; she upbraided and exaggerated, with the utmost malicious comments on it, every little indiscretion Miss Betsey had been guilty of, repeated every censure which she had heard the ill-natured part of the world pass upon her conduct, and added many more, the invention of her own fertile brain.

Some ladies they had made acquaintance with in town coming to visit them, put an end to the debate ; but neither being able presently to forget the bitter reflections cast on her by the other, both remained extremely sullen the whole night, and their mutual ill-humour might possibly have lasted much longer, but for an accident more material, which took off their attention, as it might have produced much worse consequences than any quarrel between themselves could be attended with. *It happen'd in this manner :*

The

The brother of Miss Betsey was of a fiery disposition, and though those who were entrusted with the care of his education, were not wanting in their pains to correct this propensity, which they thought would be the more unbecoming in him, as he was intended for the pulpit, yet did not their endeavours for that purpose meet with all the success they wished. Nature may be moderated, but never can be wholly changed; the seeds of wrath still remained in his soul, nor could the rudiments that had been given him be sufficient to hinder them from springing into action, when urged by any provocation. The treatment his sister had received from the gentleman-commoner, seemed to him so justifiable a one, that he thought he ought not, without great submissions on the part of the transgressor, be prevailed upon to put up with it.

The first step he took was to sound the young student, as to what he knew relating to the affair, who freely told him, as Miss Betsey herself had done, where they met the ladies, and the manner in which they went into the house; protesting, that neither himself, nor according to the best of his belief, the gentleman-commoner, had

at that time any designs in view, but meer complaisance and gallantry.

“ How then came you to separate yourselves, cry’d Mr. Francis, with some earnestness ?” “ That also was accidental, replied the other : your sister’s companion telling me, she liked the garden better than the room we were in, I thought I could do no less than attend her thither. I confess I did not consult whether those we left behind had any inclination to follow us or not.”

The air with which he spoke of this part of the adventure, had something in it, which did not give Mr. Francis the most favourable idea of Miss Flora’s conduct ; but that not much concerning him, and finding nothing wherewith he could justly reproach the student, he soon after quitted him, and went to the gentleman-commoner, having been told he might find him in his rooms.

Had any one been witness of the manner in which these two accosted each other, they would not have been at a loss to guess what would ensue: the brother of Miss Betsy came with a mind full of resentment, and determined to repair the *affront* had been offered to him in the person

person of a sister, who was very dear to him, by calling the other to a severe account for what he had done. The gentleman-commoner was descended of a noble family, and had an estate to support the dignity of his birth, and was too much puffed up and insolent on the smiles of fortune: he was conscious the affront he had given demanded satisfaction, and neither doubted of the errand on which Mr. Francis was come, nor wondered at it; but could not bring himself to acknowledge he had done amiss, nor think of making any excuse for his behaviour. Guilt in a proud heart is generally accompanied with a sullen obstinacy, for, as the poet says,

Forgiveness to the injur'd does belong,
But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.

He therefore received the interrogatories Mr. Francis was beginning to make, with an air rather indignant than complying, which the other not being able to brook, such hot words arose between them, as could not but occasion a challenge, which was given by Mr. Francis. The appointment to meet was the next morning at six o'clock, and the place,

that very field in which the gentleman-commoner, and his friend had so unluckily happened to meet the ladies in their morning's walk.

Neither of them wanted courage, nor communicated their rendezvous to any one person, in hopes of being disappointed without danger of their honour ; but each being equally animated with the ambition of humbling the arrogance of the other, both were secret as to the business, and no less punctual as to the time.

The agreement between them was sword and pistol, which both having provided themselves with, they no sooner came within a proper distance than they discharged at each other, the first course of this fatal entertainment ; that of the gentleman-commoner was so well aimed, that one of the bullets lodged in the shoulder, and the other grazing on the fleshy part of the arm of his antagonist, put him into a great deal of pain ; but these wounds rather increased than diminished the fury he was possessed of ; he instantly drew his sword, and ran at the other with so well-directed a force, that his weapon entered three inches deep into the right side of the gentleman-commoner : both of them received several other *hurts*, yet still both continued the fight with
equal

equal vehemence, nor would either of them, in all probability, have receded, 'till one or other of them had lain dead upon the place, if some countrymen, who by accident were passing that way, had not with their clubs beat down the swords of both, and carried the owners of them by meer force into the village they were going to, where they were no sooner entered, than several people who knew them, seeing them pass by in this manner, covered all over with their own blood, and guarded by a pack of rustics, ran out to enquire what had happened, which being informed of, they took them out of the hands of these men, and provided proper apartments for them.

By this time they were both extremely faint through the anguish of their wounds, and the great effusion of blood that had issued from them. Surgeons were immediately sent for, who, on examining their hurts, pronounced none of them to be mortal, yet such as would require some time for cure.

Mr. Francis suffered extreme torture in having the bullet extracted from his shoulder, yet notwithstanding that, and the weak condition he was in, he made a servant support him in his bed, while he

scrawled out these few lines to his sister :
which, as soon as finished, were carried to
her by the same person.

To Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ My dear Sister, ,

“ I HAVE endangered my life, and
“ am now confined to my bed, by the
“ wounds I have received, in endeavour-
“ ing to revenge your quarrel: do not
“ think I tell you this by way of reproach ;
“ for, I assure you, would the circum-
“ stances of the affair have permitted it to
“ have been concealed, you never should
“ have known it.

“ I should be glad to see you, but
“ think it not proper that you should
“ come to me, 'till I hear what is said
“ concerning this matter. I shall send
“ to you every day ; and that you will
“ be perfectly easy, is the earnest request
“ of,

“ Dear Betsy,

“ Your most affectionate brother,

“ And humble servant,

“ F. THOUGHTLESS.

The

The young ladies were that morning at breakfast in the parlour, with the gentlewoman of the house, when the maid came running in, and told her mistress, she had heard, in a shop where she had been, of a sad accident that had just happened; “ Two gentlemen (cried she) of the university have been fighting, and almost killed one another; and they say, continued she, it was about a young lady that one of them attempted to ravish.”

Miss Betsy and Miss Flora, at this intelligence, looked at each other with a good deal of confusion, already beginning to suspect who the persons were, and how deeply themselves, one of them especially, was interested in this misfortune. The gentlewoman ask'd her servant, if she knew the names of those who fought: “ No, madam, answered she, I could not learn that as yet; but the people in the street are all talking of it, and I doubt not but I shall hear the whole story the next time I go out.

The good gentlewoman, little imagining how much her guests were concerned in what she spoke, could not now forbear lamenting the ungovernableness of youth;

the heedless levities of the one sex, and the mad-brained passions of the other. The persons to whom she directed this discourse would not, at another time, have given much ear to it, or perhaps have replied to it with raillery; but the occasion of it now put both of them in too serious a temper to offer any interruption, and she was still going on, inveighing against the follies and vices of the age, when Miss Betsey received the above letter from her brother, which confirmed all those alarming conjectures the maid's report raised in her mind.

The mistress of the house perceiving the young man who brought the letter, came upon business to the ladies, had the good manners to leave the room, that they might talk with the greater freedom. Miss Betsey asked a thousand questions; but he was able to inform her of no farther particulars, than what the letter contained.

The moment he was gone, she ran up to her chamber, threw herself upon the bed, and in a flood of tears, gave a loose to the most poignant vexation she had ever yet experienced. Miss Flora followed, and seeing her in this condition, *thought she* could do no less, in decency,
than

than contribute every thing in her power for her consolation.

By the behaviour of this young lady in other respects, however, the reader will easily perceive it was more through policy than real good-nature, she treated her afflicted companion with the tenderness she did now: she knew that it was not by an open quarrel with Miss Betsy she could wreak any part of the spite she had conceived against her, and was therefore glad to lay hold of this opportunity to be reconciled.

“ I was afraid, my dear, (said she) that
 “ it would come to this, and that put
 “ me in so great a passion with you
 “ yesterday, for telling Mr. Francis any
 “ thing of the matter: the men are such
 “ creatures that there is no trusting them
 “ with any thing; but come (continued
 “ she, kissing her cheek) don’t grieve and
 “ torment yourself in this manner, you
 “ find there is no danger of death on
 “ either side, and as for the rest it will
 “ all blow off in time.” Miss Betsy said
 little to this, the sudden passion of her
 soul must have its vent; but when that
 was over, she began to listen to the voice
 of comfort, and, by degrees, to resume
 her natural vivacity, not foreseeing that
 F 5 this

this unhappy adventure would lay her under mortifications, which to a person of her spirit were very difficult to be borne.



CHAP. X.

Gives the catastrophe of the Oxford ramble, and in what manner the young ladies return'd to London.

IF the wounds Mr. Francis had received had been all the misfortune attending Miss Betsey in this adventure, it is probable, that as she every day heard he was in a fair way of recovery, the first gust of passion would have been all she had sustained; but she soon found other consequences arising from it, which were no less afflicting, and more galling to her pride.

The quarrel between the two young gentlemen, and the occasion of it, was presently blazed over the whole town: it spread like wild-fire; every one made their several comments upon it, and few there were who endeavoured to find any excuse for the share Miss Betsey and Miss Flora had in it.

The

The ladies of Oxford are commonly more than ordinarily circumspect in their behaviour, as indeed it behoves them to be, in a place where there are such a number of young gentlemen, many of whom pursue pleasure more than study, and scruple nothing for the gratification of their desires. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that being from their infancy trained up in the most strict reserve, and accustomed to be upon their guard against even the most distant approaches of the other sex, they should be apt to pass the severest censures on a conduct, which they had been always taught to look upon as the sure destruction of reputation, and frequently fatal to innocence and virtue.

This being pretty generally the characteristic of those ladies, who were of any distinction in Oxford. Miss Betsy and Miss Flora immediately found, that while they continued there, they must either be content to sit at home alone, or converse only with such as were as disagreeable to them, as they had now rendered themselves to those of a more unblemished fame.

They had received several visits, all of which they had not yet had time or leisure to return ; but now going to pay the
F 6
debt,

debt, which complaisance demanded from them, they were denied access at every place they went to ; all the persons were either abroad or indisposed ; but the manner in which these answers were given, easily convinced Miss Betsy and Miss Flora that they were no more than mere pretences to avoid seeing them. In the public walks, and in passing through the streets, they saw themselves shunned even to a degree of rudeness : those of their acquaintance, who were obliged to meet them, look'd another way, and went hastily on without vouchsafing a salute.

This was the treatment their late unhappy adventure drew on them, from those of their own sex, nor did those of the other seem to behave to them with greater tenderness or respect, especially the younger students, who all having got the story, thought they had a fine opportunity of exercising their poetic talents ; satires and lampoons flew about like hail : many of these anonymous compositions were directed to Miss Betsy, and thrown over the rails into the area of the house where she lodged, others were sung under the windows by persons in disguise, and copies of them handed about throughout the whole town, to the great propagation of scandal, *and the sneering faculty.*

Never,

Never, certainly did pride and vanity meet with a more severe humiliation, than what these witticisms inflicted on those, who by their inconsiderate behaviour had laid themselves open to them. Neither the assurance of Miss Flora, nor the great spirit of Miss Betsy, could enable them to stand the shock of those continual affronts, which every day presented them with. They dreaded to expose themselves to fresh insults, if they stirr'd out of the doors, and at home they were persecuted with the unwearied remonstrances of their grave landlady ; so that their condition was truly pitiable.

Both of them were equally impatient to get out of a place where they found their company was held in so little estimation ; but Miss Betsy thought her brother would not take it well, should she go to London and leave him in the condition he then was. Miss Flora's importunities, however, joined to the new occasions she every day had for increasing her discontent on staying, got the better of her apprehensions, and she wrote to her brother in the following terms :

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TO MR. FRANCIS THOUGHTLESS.

“ Dear Brother,

“ THOUGH I am not, to my great
“ affliction, permitted to see you, or offer
“ that assistance which might be expected
“ from a sister in your present situation ;
“ yet I cannot, without the extremest re-
“ gret, resolve to quit Oxford before you
“ are perfectly recovered of those hurts
“ you have received on my account.
“ However, as by your judging it im-
“ proper for me to come to you, I can-
“ not suppose you are wholly unacquaint-
“ ed with the severe usage lately given
“ me, and must look on every affront of-
“ fered to me as an indignity to you, I
“ am apt to flatter myself you will not be
“ offended, that I wish to remove from a
“ place where innocence is no defence
“ against scandal, and the shew of virtue
“ more considered than the reality.

“ Nevertheless, I shall determine no-
“ thing, ’till I hear your sentiments,
“ which, if I find conformable to mine,
“ shall set out for London with all pos-
“ sible expedition, I would very fain see
“ you before I go, and, if you consent,
“ will come to you so muffled up, as not
“ to

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 111

“ to be known, by any who may happen
“ to meet me. I shall expect your answer
“ with the utmost impatience, being,

“ My dear brother,

“ By friendship, as well as blood,

“ Most affectionately yours,

“ E. THOUGHTLESS.”

When this letter was dispatched, Miss Flora made use of all the arguments she was mistress of, in order to persuade Miss Betsy to go for London, even in case her brother should not be altogether so willing for it, as she wished he would. Miss Betsy, though no less eager than herself to be out of a place she now so much detested, would not be prevailed upon to promise any thing on this score; but persisted in her resolution of being wholly directed how to proceed, by the answer she should receive from Mr. Francis.

Miss Flora was so fretted at this perverseness, as she called it, that she told her, in a very great pet, that she might stay if she pleased, and be the laughing-stock of the town; but, for her own part, she had more spirit, and would be gone the next day. Miss Betsy coolly replied,
that

that if she thought proper to do so, she was doubtless at liberty; but believed Mr. Goodman, and even Lady Mellasin herself, would look on such a behaviour, as neither consistent with generosity or common good-manners.

It is indeed scarce probable, that the other had the least intention to do as she had said, though she still continued to threaten it, in the most positive and pre-emptory terms; and this, if we consider the temper of both these young ladies, we may reasonably suppose, might have occasioned a second quarrel between them, if the servant, whom Mr. Francis always sent to his sister, had not that instant come in, and put an end to the dispute, by delivering a letter to Miss Betsy, which she hastily opening, found it contained these lines :

TO MISS THOUGHTLESS.

“ My dear sister,

“ IT is with an inexpressible satisfaction that I find your own inclinations
 “ have anticipated the request I was just
 “ about to make you. I do assure you,
 “ the moment I received your letter, I
 “ was

“ was going to write, in order to per-
 “ swade you to do the very thing you
 “ seem to desire. Oxford is indeed a
 “ very censorious place ; I have always
 “ observed it to be so, and have fre-
 “ quently told the ladies, between jest
 “ and earnest, that I thought it was a
 “ town of the most scandal, and least sin,
 “ of any in the world. I am pretty con-
 “ fident some of those who pretend to
 “ give themselves airs concerning you and
 “ Miss Flora, are as perfectly convinced
 “ of your innocence as I myself am ; yet
 “ after all that has happened, I would
 “ not have you think of staying ; and the
 “ sooner you depart the better : you
 “ need be under no apprehensions on ac-
 “ count of my wounds ; those I received
 “ from the sword of my antagonist are
 “ in a manner healed, and that with the
 “ pistol-shot in my shoulder, is in as fine
 “ a way as can be expected in so short a
 “ time. Those I had the fortune to give
 “ him, are in a yet better condition ; so
 “ that I believe if it was not for the over
 “ caution of our surgeon, we might both
 “ quit our rooms to-morrow. I hear that
 “ our grave superiors have had some con-
 “ sultations on our duel, and that there
 “ is a talk of our being both expelled ;
 “ but for my part, I shall certainly save
 “ them

“ them the trouble, and quit the univer-
 “ sity of my own accord, as soon as my
 “ recovery is compleated: my genius is
 “ by no means adapted to the study of
 “ divinity; I think the care of my own
 “ soul more than sufficient for me, with-
 “ out taking upon me the charge of a
 “ whole parish; you may, therefore, ex-
 “ pect to see me shortly at London, as it
 “ is highly necessary I should consult Mr.
 “ Goodman concerning my future settle-
 “ ment in the world. I should be ex-
 “ tremely glad of a visit from you before
 “ you leave Oxford, more especially as I
 “ have something of moment to say to
 “ you, which I do not choose to com-
 “ municate by letter; but cannot think
 “ it at all proper, for particular reasons,
 “ that you should come to me, some or
 “ other of the gentlemen being perpe-
 “ tually dropping into my chamber; and
 “ it is impossible for you to disguise your-
 “ self so as not to be distinguished by
 “ young fellows, whose curiosity would be
 “ the more excited by your endeavours
 “ to conceal yourself. As this might re-
 “ vive the discourse of an affair, which I
 “ could wish might be buried in an eter-
 “ nal oblivion, must desire you will defer
 “ the satisfaction you propose to give me,
 “ ’till we meet at London, to which
 “ with

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 115

“ with you, and your fair companion, a
“ safe and pleasant journey. I am,

“ With the greatest tenderness,

“ My dear sister,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ F. THOUGHTLESS.”

The receipt of this letter gave an infinity of contentment to Miss Betsy; she had made the offer of going to take her leave of him, chiefly with the view of keeping him from suspecting she wanted natural affection, and was no less pleased with his refusing the request she made him on that account, than she was with his so readily agreeing to her returning to London. Miss Flora was equally delighted; they sent their footman that instant to take places in the stage-coach, and early the next morning set out from a place, which, on their entering into it, they did not imagine they should quit, either so soon, or with so little regret.



C H A P. XI.

Lays a Foundation for many Events to be produced by time, and waited for with patience.

MISS Betsy and Miss Flora, on their coming home, were in some perplexity how to relate the story of their Oxford adventure to Lady Mellasin and Mr. Goodman; and it is very likely they would have thought proper to have kept it a secret, if the unlucky duel between Mr. Francis, and the gentleman-commoner, which they were sensible would be a known thing, had not rendered the concealment of the whole utterly impracticable.

As there was no remedy, Miss Flora took upon her to lay open the matter to her mamma; which she did with so much artifice, that if that lady had been as austere, as she was really the reverse, she could not have found much to condemn, either in the conduct of her daughter or Miss Betsy: as to Mr. Goodman, he left the whole management of the young ladies, in these particulars, entirely to his wife, so said little to them on the share of the
adven-

adventure; but was extremely concerned for the part Mr. Francis had in it, as he supposed it was chiefly owing to that unlucky incident, that he had taken a resolution to leave the college; and he very well knew, that a certain nobleman, who was a distant relation of his family, and godfather to Mr. Francis, had always promised to bestow a large benefice, in his gift, upon him, as soon as he should have compleated his studies.

This honest guardian thought he should be wanting in the duty of the trust reposed in him, to suffer his charge to throw away that fine prospect in his view, if by any means he could prevent him from taking so rash and inconsiderate a step; and as to his being expelled, he doubted not, but between him and Sir Ralph, interest might be made to the heads of the university, to get the affair of the duel passed over. The greatest difficulty he had to apprehend, in compassing this point, was from the young gentleman himself, who he had observed was of a temper somewhat obstinate, and tenacious of his own opinion: resolving, however, to try all means possible, he wrote immediately to him, representing to him, in the strongest and most pathetic terms he was master of, the vast advantages the clergy enjoy'd, the
respect

respect they had from all degrees of people, and endeavoured to convince him, that there was no avocation whatever, by which a younger brother might so easily advance his fortune, and do honour to his family.

He also sent a letter to Sir Ralph Trusty, acquainting him with the whole story, and earnestly requesting that he would write to Mr. Francis, and omit nothing that might engage him to desist from doing a thing so contrary to his interest, and the intention of his deceased father, as what he now had thoughts of doing was manifestly so. These efforts, by both the guardians, were often repeated; but without the least success: the young gentleman found arguments to oppose against theirs, which neither of them could deny to have weight, particularly that of his having no call to take upon him holy orders. During these debates, in which Miss Betsy gave herself no manner of concern, she received a letter from her brother, containing these lines:

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ My dear sister,

‘ **THOUGH** I flatter myself all
 ‘ my letters afford you some sort of sa-
 ‘ tisfaction, yet by what little judgment
 ‘ *I have been able to form of the temper*
 ‘ of

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 119

“ of your sex, have reason to believe, this
“ I now send will meet a double portion
“ of welcome from you. It brings a con-
“ firmation of your beauty’s power; the
“ intelligence of a new conquest; the offer
“ of a heart, which, if you will trust a
“ brother’s recommendation, is well de-
“ serving your acceptance: but, that I
“ may not seem to speak in riddles, you
“ may remember, that the first time I had
“ the pleasure of entertaining you at my
“ rooms, a gentleman called Truworth,
“ was with us, and that the next day, when
“ you dined with that person, who after-
“ wards treated you with such unbecoming
“ liberties, he made one of the company;
“ since then you could not see him, as he
“ was obliged to go to his seat, which is
“ about thirty miles off, on an extraordi-
“ nary occasion, and returned not ‘till the
“ day after you left this town. He seem’d
“ more than ordinarily affected on my
“ telling him what had happened, on your
“ account, and after pausing a little, ‘ How
“ unhappy was I, said he, to be absent !
“ had I been here, there would have been
“ no need for the brother of Miss Betsy
“ to have exposed his life to the sword of
“ an injurious antagonist, or his character
“ to the censure of the university. I
“ would have taken upon myself to have
“ revenged the quarrel of that amiable
“ lady.

“ lady, and either have severely chastised
 “ the insolence of the aggressor, or lost
 “ the best part of my blood in the at-
 “ tempt.” “ I was very much surprised
 “ at these words, as well as the emphasis
 “ with which they were delivered; but re-
 “ covering myself as soon as I could, We
 “ are extremely obliged to you, sir, said
 “ I; but I know not if such a mistaken
 “ generosity might not have been fatal to
 “ the reputation of us both. What would
 “ the world have said of me to have been
 “ tamely passive, and suffer another to
 “ revenge the affront offered to my
 “ sister? What would they have thought
 “ of her, on finding her honour vindi-
 “ cated by one who had no concern in
 “ it?” “ No concern! cried he, with
 “ the utmost eagerness; yes, I have a
 “ concern, more deep, more strong, than
 “ that of father, brother, or all the ties of
 “ blood could give; and that you had be-
 “ fore now have been convinced of, had
 “ I not been so suddenly and so unfortu-
 “ nately called hence.”

“ Perceiving I looked very much con-
 “ founded, as well I might, “ Ah! Frank,
 “ cried he, I love your charming sister:
 “ my friends have, for these six months
 “ past, been teasing me to think of mar-
 “ riage, and several proposals have been
 “ made

“ made to me on that score; but never
 “ ’till I saw the amiable Miss Betsy, did I
 “ behold the face for whom I would ex-
 “ change my liberty : in fine, ’tis she, and
 “ only she, can make me blest; and I re-
 “ turned to Oxford full of the hopes of an
 “ opportunity to lay my heart, my person,
 “ and my fortune at her feet.

“ It would require a volume, instead of a
 “ letter to repeat half the tender and pas-
 “ sionate expressions he uttered in your fa-
 “ vour. What I have already said is
 “ enough to give you a specimen of the
 “ rest. I shall only add, that being im-
 “ patient to begin the attack he is deter-
 “ mined to make upon your heart, he is
 “ preparing to follow you to London with
 “ all possible expedition. I once had
 “ thoughts of accompanying him, but
 “ have since thought it proper to have Sir
 “ Ralph Trusty’s advice in something I
 “ have a mind to do, and for that pur-
 “ pose shall take a journey into L———e,
 “ as soon as I receive remittances from Mr.
 “ Goodman, to pay off some trifling debts
 “ I have contracted here, and defray my
 “ travelling expences; so that, if things
 “ happen as I wish they may, my friend’s
 “ passion will have made a considerable
 “ progress before I see you.

' Indeed, my dear sister, if you have not
 ' already seen a man whose person you
 ' like better, you can never have an offer
 ' that promises more felicity: he left the
 ' college soon after I came into it, beloved
 ' and respected by all that knew him, for
 ' his discreet behaviour, humanity, and
 ' affability: he went afterwards on his
 ' travels, and brought home with him
 ' all the accomplishments of the several
 ' countries he had been in, without being
 ' the least tainted with the vices or fop-
 ' peries of any of them: he has a much
 ' larger estate than your fortune could ex-
 ' pect, unincumber'd with debts, mort-
 ' gages, or poor relations: his family is
 ' antient, and, by the mother's side, ho-
 ' nourable; but, above all, he has sense,
 ' honour, and good-nature,—rare qualities!
 ' which, in my opinion, cannot fail of
 ' making him an excellent husband, when-
 ' ever he comes to be such.

' But I shall leave him to plead his own
 ' cause, and you to follow your own in-
 ' clinations. I am,

' with the most unfeigned good wishes,

' My dear sister,

' Your affectionate brother,

' And humble servant,

' F. THOUGHTLESS.

' P.S.

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 123

- ‘ P.S. Mr. Truworth knows nothing of
‘ my writing to you in his behalf; so
‘ you are at liberty to receive him as
‘ you shall think proper.

Miss Betsy required no less a cordial than this, to revive her spirits, pretty much depressed since her ill usage at Oxford.

She had not time, however, to indulge the pleasure of reflecting on this new triumph, on her first receiving the news of it. Lady Mellasin had set that evening apart to make a grand visit to a person of her acquaintance, who was just married; the young ladies were to accompany her, and Miss Betsy was in the midst of the hurry of dressing when the post brought the letter, so she only looked it carelessly over, and locked it in her cabinet ’till she should have more leisure for the examination.— They were all ready; the coach with the best hammock-cloth and harnesses was at the door, and only waited while Mrs. Prinks was drawing on her lady’s gloves, which happened to be a little too tight.

In this unlucky instant one of the footmen came running into the parlour, and told Lady Mellasin, that there was a very
G 2 ill-

ill-looking woman at the door, who enquired for her ladyship, and that she must needs speak with her, and that she had a letter to deliver, which she would give into nobody's hand but her own. Lady Mellasin seemed a little angry at the insolence and folly of the creature, as she then termed it; but ordered she should be shewed into the back parlour: they were not above five minutes together, before the woman went away, and Lady Mellasin returned to the room where Miss Betsey and Miss Flora were waiting for her. A confusion not to be described sat on every feature in her face; she looked pale, she trembled, and having told the young ladies something had happened, which prevented her going where she intended, flew up into her dressing-room, followed by Mrs. Prinks, who appeared very much alarmed at seeing her ladyship in this disorder.

Miss Betsey and Miss Flora were also surprised, and doubtless had their own conjectures upon this sudden turn. 'Tis not likely, however, that either of them, especially Miss Betsey, could hit upon the right: but whatever their thoughts were, they communicated them not to each other, and seemed only intent on considering in *what manner* they should dispose of themselves

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 125

selves that evening, it not being proper they should make the visit above-mentioned without her ladyship. As they were discoursing on this head, Mrs. Prinks came down, and having ordered the coach to be put up, and sent a footman to call a hack, ran up stairs again, in a great hurry, to her lady.

In less time than could almost be imagined they both came down: Lady Mel-lasin had pulled off her rich apparel, and mobbed herself up in a cloak and hood, that little of her face, and nothing of her air, could be distinguished: the two young ladies stared, and were confounded at the metamorphosis. "Is your ladyship going out in that dress?" cried Miss Flora; but Miss Betsy said nothing. "Aye, child, (reply'd the lady, somewhat faultering in her speech) a poor relation, who they say is dying, has sent to beg to see me." She said no more, the hackney-coach was come, her ladyship and Mrs. Prinks stepped hastily into it; the latter in doing so, telling the coachman in so low a voice, as nobody but himself could hear, to what place he was to drive.

After they were gone, Miss Flora proposed walking in the park; but Miss Betsy did not happen to be in a humour to go
either

either there or any where else, at that time, on which the other told her, she had got the spleen; but, said she, "I am resolved not to be infected with it, so you must not take it ill, if I leave you alone for a few hours; for I should think it a sin against common sense, to sit moping at home without shewing myself to any one soul in the world, after having taken all this pains in dressing." Miss Betsey assured her, as she might do with a great deal of sincerity, that she should not at all be displeased to be entirely free from any company whatsoever for the whole evening; and to prove the truth of what she said, gave orders that instant to be denied to whoever should come to visit her. "Well (cried Miss Flora, laughing) I shall give your compliments, however, where I am going," and then mentioned the names of some persons she had just then taken into her head to visit. "As you please for that," replied Miss Betsey, with the same gay air; "but don't tell them it is because I am eaten up with the vapours, that I choose to stay at home rather than carry my compliments in person; for if ever I find out (continued she) that you are so mischievous, I shall contrive some way or other to be revenged on you."

They

They talked to each other in this pleasant manner, 'till a chair Miss Flora had sent for was brought into the hall, in which she seated herself for her intended ramble, and Miss Betsy went into her chamber, where how she was amused will presently be shewn.

C H A P. XII.

Is little more than a continuance of the former.

MISS Betsy had no sooner disengaged herself from the incumbrance of a formal dress, and put on one more light and easy, *al fresco*, as the Spaniards phrase it, than she began to give her brother's letter a more serious and attentive perusal, than she had the opportunity of doing before.

She was charmed and elated with the description Mr. Francis had told her, she had inspired in the breast of his friend: she called to her mind the idea of those persons who were present at the entertainments he mentioned, and easily recollected *which* was most likely to be the lover,

G 4

though

though she remembered not the name : she very well now remembered there was one that seemed both times to regard her with glances, which had somewhat peculiar in them, and which then she had interpreted as the certain indications of feeling something in his heart of the nature her brother had described ; but not seeing him afterwards, nor hearing any mention made of him, at least that she took notice of, the imagination went out of her head.

This account of him, however, brought to her memory every thing she had observed concerning him, and was very well convinced she had seen nothing, either in his person or deportment, that was not perfectly agreeable ; yet notwithstanding all this, and the high encomiums given of him by a brother, who she knew would not deceive her, she was a little vexed to find herself pressed by one so dear, and so nearly related to her, to think of him as a man she ever intended to marry : she thought she could be pleased to have such a lover, but could not bring herself to be content that he ever should be a husband. She had too much good sense not to know it suited not with the condition of a wife to indulge herself in the *gaieties* she at present did, which though

innocent, and, as she thought, becoming enough in the present state she now was, might not be altogether pleasing to one, who, if he so thought proper, had the power of restraining them. In fine, she looked upon a serious behaviour as unsuitable to one of her years, and therefore resolved not to enter into a condition, which demanded some share of it, at least for a long time; that is, when she should be grown weary of the admiration, flatteries, and addresses of the men, and no longer found any pleasure in seeing herself preferred before all the women of her acquaintance.

Though it is certain that few young handsome ladies are without some share of the vanity here described, yet it is to be hoped, there are not many who are possessed of it in that immoderate degree Miss Betsy was. It is, however, for the sake of those who are so, that these pages are wrote, to the end they may use their utmost endeavours to correct that error, as they will find it so fatal to the happiness of one, who had had scarce any other blameable propensity in her whole composition.

This young lady was full of meditation on her new conquest, and the manner in which

which she should receive the victim, who was so shortly to prostrate himself at the shrine of her beauty, when she heard somebody run hastily up stairs, and go into Lady Mellasin's dressing-room, which being, as has been already taken notice of on a very remarkable occasion, she stepped out of the chamber to see who was there, and found Mrs. Prinks very busy at a cabinet, where her ladyship's jewels were always kept: "So, Mrs. Prinks, (said she) is my lady come home?" "No, Miss, (replied the other) her ladyship is certainly the most compassionate best woman in the world: her cousin is very bad indeed, and she has sent me for a bottle of reviving drops, which I am going back to carry." With these words she shuffled something into her pocket, and having locked the cabinet again, went out of the room saying, — "Your servant, Miss Betsy, I cannot stay, for life's at stake."

This put Miss Betsy in the greatest consternation imaginable: she knew Lady Mellasin could have no drops in that cabinet, unless they were contained in a phial of no larger circumference than a thimble, the drawers of it being very shallow, and made only to hold rings, croceats, necklaces, and such other flat trinkets: she thought

thought there was something very odd and extraordinary in the whole affair. A strange woman coming in so abrupt a manner,—her refusing to give the letter to any one but Lady Mellasin herself,—her ladyship's confusion at the receipt of it,—her disguising herself, and going out with Prinks in that violent hurry,—the latter being sent home,—her taking something out of the casket, and her going back again; all these incidents, I say, when put together, denoted something of a mystery not easily penetrated into.

Miss Betsy, however, was not of a disposition to think too much, or too deeply, on those things which the most nearly concerned herself, much less on such as related entirely to other people; and Miss Flora coming home soon after, and relating what conversation had passed in the visits she had been making, and the dresses the several ladies had on, and such other trifling matters, diverted the other from those serious reflections, which might otherwise, perhaps, have lasted somewhat longer.

When Miss Flora was undress'd, they went down together into the parlour, where they found Mr. Goodman extremely uneasy, that Lady Mellasin was not come

home. He had been told in what manner she went out, and it now being grown dark, he was frighted lest any ill accident should befall her, as she had no man-servant, nor any one with her but her woman, whom, he said, he could not look on as a sufficient guard for a lady of quality, against those insults, which night, and the libertinism of the age, frequently produced.

This tender husband asked the young ladies a thousand questions, concerning the possibility of guessing to whom, and to what part of the town she was gone, in order that he might go himself, or send a servant to conduct her safely home; but neither of them were able to inform him any thing farther than what has been already related; that she had been sent for to a sick relation, who, as it appear'd to them, had been very pressing to engage her ladyship to that charitable office.

Mr. Goodman then began to endeavour to recollect the names and places of abode, of all those he had ever heard her say were of her kindred, for she had never suffer'd any of them to come to the house, under pretence that some of them had not behaved well, and that others being fallen to decay, and poor, might expect favours from her, and that she would suffer no-
body

body belonging to her to be burthensome to him.

He was, notwithstanding, about to send his men in search of his beloved lady, though he knew not where to direct them to go, when she and Mrs. Prinks came home: he received her with all the transports a man of his years could be capable of, but gently chid her for the little care she had taken of herself, and looking on her, as Mrs. Prinks was pulling off her hood, " Bless me, my dear, said he, what
 " was your fancy for going out in such a
 " dress?" " My cousin, replied she, is
 " in very wretched circumstances, lives
 " in a little mean lodging, and, besides,
 " owes money; if I had gone any thing,
 " like myself, the people of the house
 " might have expected great things from
 " me. I am very compassionate, indeed,
 " to every one under misfortunes, but
 " will never squander Mr. Goodman's
 " money for their relief."

" I know thou art all goodness, (said the old gentleman, kissing her with the utmost tenderness;) " but something, continued he, methinks, might be spared."
 " Leave it to me, Mr. Goodman, answer'd she, I know best, — they have not deserved it from me." She then told a
 long

long story, how kind she had been to this cousin, and some others of her kindred; in her first husband's time, and gave some instances of the ill use they had made of her bounties. All she said had so much the appearance of truth, that even Miss Betsy, who was far from having an high opinion of her sincerity, believed it, and thought no farther of what had passed; she had, indeed, in a short time, sufficient business of her own to take up all her mind.

Mr. Goodman, the very next day, brought home a very agreeable young gentleman to dine with him, who, though he paid an extraordinary respect to lady Mellasin, and treated her daughter with the utmost complaisance, yet in the compliments he paid to Miss Betsy, there was something which seemed to tell her she had inspired him with a passion more tender than bare respect, and more sincere than common complaisance.

She had very penetrating eyes this way, and never made a conquest without knowing she did so; she was not, therefore, wanting in all those little artifices she had but too much made her study, in order to fix the impression she had given this *stranger* as indelible as possible: this she had a very good opportunity for doi g;
he

he staid the whole afternoon, drank tea with the ladies, and left them not, 'till a crowd of company coming in, he thought good-manners obliged him to retire.

Miss Betsy was filled with the most impatient curiosity to know the name and character of this person, whom she had already set down in her mind as a new adorer: she asked Miss Flora, when they were going to bed, as if it were a matter of indifference to her, and merely for the sake of chat, who that gentleman was who had dined with them, and made so long a visit; but that young lady had never seen him before, and was as ignorant of every thing concerning him as herself.

Miss Betsy, however, lost no part of her repose that night, on this account, as she doubted not but she should very soon be informed by himself of all she wished to know: she was but just out of bed the next morning, when a maid-servant came into the chamber and delivered a letter to her, which she told her was brought by a porter, who waited for an answer.

Miss Betsy's heart fluttered at the mention of a letter, flattering herself it came from the person who at present engross'd her thoughts; but on taking it from the
mind,

maid found a woman's hand on the superscription, and one perfectly known to her, tho' at that instant she could not recollect to whom it belonged : she was a good deal surpris'd, when, on breaking the seal, she found it came from Miss Forward, with whom, as well as the best of the boarding-school ladies, she had ceased all correspondents for many months. The contents were these :

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ Dear Miss Betsy,

“ THOUGH since I had the pleasure
 “ of seeing or hearing from you, so many
 “ accidents, and odd turns of fortune,
 “ have happened to me, as might very
 “ well engross my whole attention ; yet
 “ I cannot be so far forgetful of our
 “ former friendship, as to be in the same
 “ town with you, without letting you
 “ know, and desiring to see you. Were
 “ there a possibility of my waiting on you,
 “ I certainly should have made you the
 “ first visit ; but alas ! at present there is
 “ not. — Oh ! Miss Betsy, I have strange
 “ things to tell you ; — things fit only to
 “ be trusted to a person whose generosity
 “ and good-nature I have experienced. If
 “ therefore you are so good to come, I
 “ *must* intreat you will bring no compa-

“ nion

“ nion with you, and also that you will
 “ allow me that favour the first leisure
 “ hour ; because I am in some hopes of
 “ returning to L— — —e in a short time.
 “ Please to enquire for the house of one
 “ Mrs. Nightshade, in Chick-lane, near
 “ Smithfield, where you will find her,
 “ who, in spite of time, absence, and a
 “ thousand perplexing circumstances, is,

“ With the most tender regard,

“ My dear Miss Betsy,

“ Your very sincere,

“ Though unfortunate friend,

A. FORWARD.

“ P. S. Be so good to let me know, by a
 “ line, whether I may flatter myself
 “ with the hopes of seeing you, and at
 “ what time.”

Though Miss Betsy, through the hurry
 of her own affairs, had neglected writing
 to this young lady for a considerable time,
 yet she was extremely pleased at hearing
 from her: she could not imagine how-
 ever, what strange turns of fortune they
 were she mentioned in her letter, and
 which she supposed had brought her to
 London.

London. Equally impatient to satisfy her curiosity in this point, as to see a person with whom she had contracted her first friendship, she took pen and paper, and immediately wrote this answer :

TO MISS FORWARD.

“ Dear Miss Forward,

“ T H E satisfaction of hearing you
 “ were so near me would be compleat,
 “ were it not allayed by the hints you
 “ give, that some accidents, not altoge-
 “ ther pleasing, had occasioned it. I long
 “ to hear what has happened to you,
 “ since last we saw each other, and will
 “ not fail to wait on you this afternoon.
 “ I know nothing of the part of the town
 “ you are in, but suppose a hackney-
 “ coach will be able to find its way. I
 “ will detain your messenger no longer,
 “ than to tell you that I am,

“ With the most perfect amity,

“ Dear Miss Forward,

“ Your very affectionate friend,

“ And humble servant,

“ E. THOUGHTLESS.

Miss

Miss Flora had not been present when the maid delivered the letter to Miss Betsy ; but coming into the chamber just as she had finished, and was sealing up the answer to it : “ So, said she, have I caught you ? ” Pray what new lover have you been writing to this morning ? ” It was in vain that Miss Betsy told her, she never had yet seen the man she thought worthy of a letter from her, on the score of love : the other persisted in her asseverations ; and Miss Betsy, to silence her raillery, was obliged to shew her some part of the letter she had received from Miss Forward.

It being near breakfast-time they went down together into the parlour, and as they were drinking their coffee, “ Well, pretty lady, said Mr. Goodman to Miss Betsy with a smile, how did you like the gentleman that dined here yesterday. ” This question so much surprised her, that she could not help blushing, “ Like him, sir, replied she, I did not take any notice of him. — I remember a stranger was here, and staid a good while, and that is all ; for I neither observed any thing he said or did, or thought on him since. ” “ The agreeable confusion, cried Mr. Goodman, gaily

“ gaily, you are in at my mentioning
 “ him, makes me believe you remarked
 “ him more than you are willing to ac-
 “ knowledge, and I am very glad of it:—
 “ you do him but justice, I assure you,
 “ for he is very much in love with you.”

“ Lord, sir, (said Miss Betsy, blushing
 “ still more) I cannot imagine what makes
 “ you talk so; I don’t suppose the man
 “ thinks of me any more than I do of
 “ him.” “ That may be,” rejoined he,
 laughing outright. Lady Mellasin then
 took up the word, and told her husband,
 he was very merry that morning. “ Aye,
 “ said he, the hurry of spirits I have put
 “ poor Miss Betsy in has made me so;
 “ for I can assure you the thing is very
 “ serious; but, continued he, you shall
 “ know the whole of it.”

He then proceeded to inform them,
 that the person he had been speaking of
 was the son of one who had formerly been
 a merchant; but who having acquired a
 large fortune by his industry, had for se-
 veral years past left off business, and lived
 mostly in the country; that the young
 gentleman had seen Miss Betsy at St. Paul’s
 rehearsal, when they were all there to hear
 the music; that the next day after, he
 had come to him at a coffee-house, which

it was known he frequented, and after asking many questions concerning Miss Betsy, and hearing she was not engaged, declared he was very much charm'd with her, and entreated his permission, as being her guardian, to make his addresses to her. Mr. Goodman remembered the affront he had received from Alderman Saving on a like occasion, and was determined not to lay himself open to the same from Mr. Staple (for so he was called) and plainly told the young lover that he would encourage nothing of that sort, without the approbation of his father; that after this he had a meeting with the old gentleman, who being fully satisfied by him of Miss Betsy's family, fortune, and character, had no objections to make against his son's inclination. "Having
 " this sanction, continued Mr. Goodman,
 " and believing it may be a very proper
 " match for both of you, I brought him
 " home with me to dinner yesterday,
 " and should be glad to know how far
 " you think you can approve of the
 " offer, before I give him my consent to
 " make it."

" I have already told you, sir, replied
 " Miss Betsy, that I took but little notice
 " of the gentleman; — or if I had, should
 " never have ask'd myself the question,
 " whether

“ whether I could like him or not; for
 “ as to marriage, I do assure you, sir, it
 “ is a thing that has never yet entered
 “ into my head.” “ Nay, as to that, re-
 “ turned he, it is time enough indeed. —
 “ A good husband, however, can never
 “ come unseasonably. — I shall tell him
 “ he may visit you, and leave you to an-
 “ swer the addresses according to the dic-
 “ tates of your heart.”

Miss Betsey neither opposed, nor gave consent to what her guardian said on this score; but her not refusing seemed to him a sufficient grant: so there passed nothing more except some little pleasantries usual on such subjects.

C H A P. XIII.

Contains some part of the history of Miss For-ward's adventures, from the time of her leaving the Boarding-school, as related by herself to Miss Betsey.

MISS Betsey had now her head, though not her heart, full of the two new conquests she had made: Mr. Trueworth was strongly recommended by her brother,
 —Mr.

—Mr. Staple by her guardian; yet all the ideas she had of either of them, served only to excite in her the pleasing imagination, how, when they both came to address her, she should play the one against the other, and give herself a constant round of diversion, by their alternate contentment or disquiet. As the barometer, said she to herself, is governed by the weather, so is the man in love governed by the woman he admires: he is a meer machine, — acts nothing of himself, — has no will or power of his own, but is lifted up or depress'd, just as the charmer of his heart is in the humour. I wish, continued she, I knew what day these poor creatures would come, — though 'tis no matter, — I have got, it seems, possession of their hearts, and their eyes will find graces in me, let me appear in what shape soever.

These contemplations, however enchanting as they were to her vanity, did not render her forgetful of the promise she had made Miss Forward, and as soon as dinner was over, ordered a hackney coach to be called, and went to the place Miss Forward's letter had directed.

It is scarce possible for any one to be more surpris'd than she was, on entering the house of Mrs. Nightshade. The father
of

of Miss Forward was a gentleman of a large estate, and of great consideration in the county where he lived, and she expected to have seen his daughter in lodgings suitable to her birth and fortune: instead of which, she found herself conducted by an old ill-looking mean woman, who gave her to understand she was the mistress of the house, up two-pair-of-stairs, so narrow that she was obliged to hold her hoop quite under her arm, in order to gain the steep and almost perpendicular ascent: — she was then shewed into a little dirty chamber, where, on a wretched bed, Miss Forward lay, in a most melancholy and dejected posture. “Here is a lady wants you,” said the hag, who ushered in Miss Betsy. These words, and the opening the door, made Miss Forward start from the bed, to receive her visitor in the best manner she could: she saluted, she embraced her with all the demonstrations of joy and affection; but Miss Betsy was so confounded at the appearance of every thing about her, that she was almost incapable of returning her caresses.

Miss Forward easily perceived the confusion her friend was in, and having led her to a chair, and seated herself near her, “My dear Miss Betsy, said she, I do not wonder you are alarmed at find-
“ing

“ing me in a condition so different from
 “what you might have expected : my let-
 “ter indeed gave you a hint of some mis-
 “fortunes that had befallen me ; but I
 “forbore letting you know of what na-
 “ture they were, because the facts, with-
 “out the circumstances, which would have
 “been too long to communicate by writ-
 “ing, might have made me appear more
 “criminal, than I flatter myself you will
 “think I really am, when you shall be
 “told the whole of my unhappy story.”

Miss Betsy then assured her, she should take a friendly part in every thing that had happened to her, and that nothing could oblige her more than the confidence she mentioned : on which the other taking her by the hand, and letting fall some tears, said, “O Miss Betsy! Miss Betsy!—I have
 “suffered much, and if you find a great
 “deal to blame me for, you will find yet
 “much more to pity.” Then after having paused a little, as if to recollect the passages she was about to relate, began in this manner :

‘ You must remember, said she, that
 ‘ when you left us to go for London, I
 ‘ was strictly watched and confined, on
 ‘ account of my innocent correspondence
 ‘ with Mr. Sparkish ; but that young gen-
 VOL. I. H ‘ tleman

' a gentleman being sent to the university soon
 ' after, I had the same liberty as ever, and
 ' as much as any young lady in the school.
 ' The tutoress, who was with us in your
 ' time, being in an ill state of health,
 ' went away, and one Mademoiselle Gre-
 ' nouille, a French woman, was put in her
 ' place: the governess had a high opinion
 ' of her, not only on the score of the cha-
 ' racter she had of her, but also for the
 ' gravity of her behaviour. But as de-
 ' mure, however, as she affected to be
 ' before her, she could be as merry and
 ' facetious as ourselves, when out of her
 ' sight, as you will soon perceive by what
 ' I have to tell you.

' Whenever any of us took an evening's
 ' walk, this was the person to whose care
 ' we were entrusted, the governess growing
 ' every day more infirm, and indeed un-
 ' able to attend us.

' It was towards the close of a very hot
 ' day, that myself, and two more, went
 ' with Mademoiselle Grenouille to take a
 ' little air in the lane, at the backside of
 ' the great road, that leads up to Lord
 ' ****'s fine seat. We were about the
 ' middle of the lane when we heard the
 ' sound of French horns, double curtalls,
 ' and other instruments of wind music:
 ' Ma-

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‘ Mademoiselle at this could not restrain
‘ the natural alertness of her country, but
‘ went dancing on, ’till we came very near
‘ those that played.

‘ You must know, my dear Miss Betsy,
‘ (continued she) that my Lord ****’s park
‘ wall reaches to the bottom of this lane,
‘ and has a little gate into it: having, it
‘ seems, some company with him, he had
‘ ordered two tents to be erected in that
‘ part of the park; the one for himself
‘ and friends, the other for the music,
‘ who sounded the instruments to the
‘ healths were toasted; but this we being
‘ ignorant of, and delighted with the har-
‘ mony, wander’d on ’till we came close
‘ to the little gate I mentioned, and there
‘ stood still listening to it. Some one or
‘ other of the gentlemen saw us, and said
‘ to the others, — ‘ We have eve’s-drop-
‘ pers;’ on which they quitted their seats,
‘ and ran to the gate. On seeing them all
‘ approach, we would have drawn back,
‘ but they were too quick for us; the gate
‘ was instantly thrown open, and six or
‘ seven gentlemen, of whom my Lord him-
‘ self was one, rushed out upon us. Per-
‘ ceiving we endeavoured to escape them,
‘ they caught hold of us, — ‘ Nay, ladies,
‘ said one of them, you must not think

“ to avoid paying the piper, after having
 “ heard his music.”

‘ Mademoiselle on this address’d her-
 ‘ self to my Lord ****, with as much for-
 ‘ mality as she could assume, and told him
 ‘ we were young ladies of distinction,
 ‘ who were placed at a boarding-school
 ‘ just by, and at present were under her
 ‘ care, so begged no rudeness might be
 ‘ offered. His Lordship protested on his
 ‘ honour none should ; but insisted on our
 ‘ coming into the park, and drinking one
 ‘ glass of whatever wine we pleased ; upon
 ‘ which, — “ What say you, ladies ?” cried
 “ Mademoiselle, I believe we may depend
 “ on his Lordship’s protection.” None
 ‘ of us oppos’d the motion, as being as
 ‘ glad to accept it as herself. In a word,
 ‘ we went in, and were conducted to the
 ‘ tent, in the midst of which were placed
 ‘ bottles, glasses, jellies, sweet-meats,
 ‘ pickles, and I know not what other
 ‘ things to regale and quicken the ap-
 ‘ petite. Servants, who attended, cooled
 ‘ the glasses out of a silver fountain, on
 ‘ a little pedestal, at one end of the tent,
 ‘ and filled every one a glass with what
 ‘ each of us chose. One of the com-
 ‘ pany perceiving our conductress was a
 ‘ French woman, talked to her in her
 ‘ own language, and led her a minuette
 ‘ round

round the table ; and, in the mean time,
 the others took the opportunity of enter-
 taining us : he that had hold of me, so
 plied me with kisses and embraces, that
 I scarce knew where I was. — Oh ! the
 difference between his caresses and the
 boyish insipid salutes of Master Sparkish !
 The others, I suppose, were served with
 the same agreeable robustness I was ; but
 I had not the power of observing them,
 any more than, as I afterwards found,
 they had of me.

In short, never were poor innocent girls
 so pressed, — so kissed. — every thing
 but the dernier undoing deed, and that
 there was no opportunity of completing,
 every one of us, our tutoresses not ex-
 cepted, I am certain experienced.

“Heavens ! (cry’d Miss Betsy, inter-
 rupting her) how I envied your happi-
 ness a moment since, and how I tremble
 for you now !”

O Miss Betsy, replied Miss Forward,
 every thing would have been done in
 that forgetful hour ; but as I have al-
 ready said, there was not an opportunity.
 My lover notwithstanding, for so I must
 call him, would not let me get out of
 his arms, ’till I had told him my name,
 and

' and by what means he should convey a
 ' letter to me. I affected to make a
 ' scruple of granting this request, though
 ' Heaven knows I was but too well pleased
 ' at his grasping me still faster, in order to
 ' compel me to it. I then gave him my
 ' name, and told him, that if he would
 ' needs write, I knew no other way by
 ' which he might be sure of my receiving
 ' his letter, but by slipping it into my
 ' hand as I was coming out of church,
 ' which he might easily do, there being
 ' always a great concourse of people about
 ' the door: on this he gave me a salute,
 ' the warmth of which I never shall forget,
 ' and then suffered me to depart with my
 ' companions, who, if they were not quite
 ' so much engaged as myself, had yet
 ' enough to make them remember this
 ' night's ramble.

' The tutors knew well enough how to
 ' excuse our staying out so much longer
 ' than usual, and neither the governess,
 ' nor any one in the family, except our-
 ' selves, knew any thing of what had
 ' passed. I cannot say but my head ran
 ' extremely on this adventure. I heartily
 ' wished my pretty fellow might keep his
 ' word in writing to me, and was form-
 ' ing a thousand projects how to keep up
 ' a correspondence with him. I don't tell
 ' you.

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“ you I was what they call in love; but
“ certainly I was very near it, and longed
“ much more for Sunday than ever I had
“ done for a new gown. At last the wish’d.
“ for day arrived, — my gentleman was
“ punctual, — he came close to me in the
“ church porch, — I held my hand in a
“ careless manner, with my handkerchief
“ in it behind me, and presently found
“ something put into it, which I hastily
“ conveyed into my pocket, and on coming
“ home, found a little three-corner’d billet,
“ containing these lines :

To the charming Miss FORWARD.

“ Most lovely of your sex,

“ I HAVE not slept since I saw you,
“ — so deep an impression has your
“ beauty made on my heart, that I find I
“ cannot live without you; nor even die
“ in peace, if you vouchsafe not my last
“ breath to issue at your feet. In pity
“ then to the sufferings you occasion,
“ grant me a second interview, though it
“ be only to kill me with your frowns.
“ I am too much a stranger in these parts
“ to contrive the means; be, therefore,
“ so divinely good to do it for me, else
“ expect to see me carried by your door
“ a bleeding deathless corps, — the vic-

“ tim of your cruelty, instead of your
 “ compassion, to

“ Your most grateful adorer,

“ And everlasting slave,

“ R. WILDLY.”

“ In a postscript to this (pursued Miss
 “ Forward) he told me, that he would be
 “ in the church porch in the afternoon,
 “ hoping to receive my answer by the same
 “ means I had directed him to convey to
 “ me the dictates of his heart.

“ I read this letter over and over, as you
 “ may easily guess, by my remembering
 “ the contents of it so perfectly; but it is
 “ impossible for me to express the per-
 “ plexity I was in how to reply to it. I
 “ do not mean how to excuse myself from
 “ granting the interview he so passionately
 “ requested; for that, perhaps, I wished
 “ for with as much impatience as he could
 “ do, but I was distracted at not being
 “ able to contrive any practicable method
 “ for our meeting.

“ O Miss Betsey, how did I long for you,
 “ or such a friend as you, to assist me in
 “ this dilemma! but there was no one
 “ *person in the whole house* I dared trust
 “ with

' with such a secret : — I could not eat a
 ' bit of dinner, nor scarce speak a word to
 ' any body ; so much were my thoughts
 ' taken up with what I should do. I was
 ' resolved to see him, and hear what he
 ' had to say, whatever should be the con-
 ' sequence ; at last I hit upon a way, dan-
 ' gerous indeed in every respect, and
 ' shameful in a girl of my condition ; yet
 ' as there were no other, the frenzy I was
 ' possess'd of, compelled me to have re-
 ' course to it.

' You must remember, my dear Miss
 ' Betsy, continued she, with a deep sigh,
 ' the little door at the farther end of the
 ' garden, where by your kind contrivance
 ' young Sparkish was introduced : it was
 ' at this door I determin'd to meet Mr.
 ' Wildly. This you may be sure could
 ' not be done by day, without a disco-
 ' very, some one or other being conti-
 ' nually running into the garden. I there-
 ' fore fixed the rendezvous at night, at
 ' an hour when I was positive all the fa-
 ' mily would be in bed, and order'd it in
 ' this manner :

' Chance aided my ill genius in my
 ' undoing, I lay at that time alone ; —
 ' Miss Bab, who used to be my bedfellow,
 ' was gone home for a fortnight, on ac-
 ' count

' count of a great wedding in their family,
 ' and I thought I could easily slip down
 ' stairs when every body was asleep, and
 ' go through the kitchen, from which you
 ' know there is a passage into the garden.
 ' I took no care for any thing, but to pre-
 ' vent the disappointment of my design;
 ' for I apprehended nothing of ill from a
 ' a man who ador'd me, and of whose will
 ' and actions I foolishly imagined I had
 ' the sole command.

' The settling this matter in my mind
 ' engross'd all my thoughts 'till the bell
 ' began to ring for divine service, and I
 ' had only time to write these lines in an-
 ' swer to his billet;

To Mr. WILDLY.

" SIR,

" I HAVE been always told it was
 " highly criminal in a young maid,
 " like me, to listen to the addresses of
 " any man without receiving the per-
 " mission of her parents for so doing;
 " yet I hope I shall stand excused both to
 " them and you, if I confess I am willing
 " to be the first to hear what so nearly
 " concerns myself. I have but one way
 " of speaking to you, and if your love
 " be as sincere and fervent as you pre-
 " tend,

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• tend, you will not think it too much:
 • to wait between the hours of eleven
 • and twelve this night, at a green door,
 • in the wall which encompasses our gar-
 • den, at the further end of the lane,
 • leading to that part of Lord ****'s park,
 • where we first saw each other; you
 • will find me, if no cross accident inter-
 • venes, at the time and place I men-
 • tion; but impute this condescension to
 • no other motive than that compassion
 • you implore. I flatter myself your in-
 • tentions are honourable, and in that be-
 • lief am,

“ S I R,

“ Your humble servant,

“ A. FORWARD.”

Miss Betsy during the repetition of this
 letter, and some time before, shook her
 head, and shewed great tokens of surprize
 and disapprobation, but offering no inter-
 ruption, the other went on in her discourse
 in this manner:

• “I protest to you, my dear Miss Betsy,
 • said she, that I had nothing in view by
 • this letter, than to secure him to me as a
 • lover. I never had reason to repent of
 • the private correspondence I carried on

' with Mr. Sparkish, nor knew it was in
 ' the nature of man to take advantage of
 ' a maid's simplicity ; but I will not pro-
 ' tract the narrative I promised by any
 ' needless particulars. Every thing hap-
 ' pened but too fortunately, alas ! accord-
 ' ing to my wish : I found Mr. Wildly,
 ' in the church-porch, gave him the fatal
 ' biller, unperceived by any one : night
 ' came on, — all the family were gone to
 ' their repose, — and I unseen, unheard,
 ' and unsuspected, quitted my chamber,
 ' and taking the route I told you of,
 ' open'd the garden door, where it seems
 ' the person I expected had waited above
 ' half an hour.

' His first salutations were the most
 ' humble, and withal the most endearing,
 ' that could be.' — " My angel, said he,
 " how heavenly good you are ! permit me
 " thus to thank you." " With these
 ' words he threw himself on his knees,
 ' and taking one of my hands, kiss'd it
 ' with the extremest tenderness. But, oh !
 ' let no young woman depend on the first
 ' professions of her lover ; nor in her
 ' own power of keeping him at a proper
 ' distance.'

Here a sudden gush of tears prevented
her, for some minutes, from prosecuting
her

her discourse, and Miss Betsy found herself obliged to treat her with more tenderness, than in her own mind she thought the nature of her case deserved.



C H A P. XIV.

Concludes Miss Forward's narrative, and relates some further particulars of Miss Betsy's behaviour, on hearing a detail she so little expected.

HOW sweet are the consolations of a sincere friend! — how greatly do they alleviate the severest of misfortunes! — Miss Forward soon dried up her tears, on a soft commiseration she saw they excited in Miss Betsy; and stifling, as well as she could the rising sighs with which her bosom heaved at the remembrance of what she was going to relate, resumed her mournful story in these terms:

‘ You may very well suppose, said she, that the garden-door was not a proper place to entertain my lover in: — good-manners forbid me to use him in so coarse a manner: — besides, late as it was, some passenger might happen to come that way; I therefore led him into

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' the harbour, at the end of the terrass,
 ' where we sat down together on that
 ' broad bench under the arch, where you
 ' so often used to loll, and call it your
 ' throne of state. Never was there a finer
 ' night; — the moon and her attendant
 ' stars, shone with uncommon brightness;
 ' the air was all serene, the boisterous winds
 ' were all lock'd in their caverns, and only
 ' gentle zephirs with their fanning wings,
 ' wafted a thousand odours from the neigh-
 ' bouring plants, perfuming all around. —
 ' 'Twas an enchanting scene; nature her-
 ' self seemed to conspire my ruin, and
 ' contributed all in her power to lull my
 ' mind into a soft forgetfulness of what I
 ' owed myself, — my fame, my fortune, —
 ' and my family.

' I was beginning to tell him, how sen-
 ' sible I was, that to admit him in this
 ' manner was against all the rules of de-
 ' cency and decorum, and that I hoped
 ' he would not abuse the good opinion I
 ' had of him, nor entertain the worst of
 ' me for my so readily complying with
 ' his request, and such like stuff: to which
 ' he gave little ear, and only answered
 ' me with protestations of the most violent
 ' passion that ever was; — swore that I
 ' *had more charms* than my whole sex be-
 ' *sides* could boast of; — that I was an
 ' angel!

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‘ angel! — a goddess! — that I was nature’s whole perfection in one piece: then looking on me with the most tender languishments, he repeated these lines in a kind of extasy.

‘ In forming thee, heav’n took unusual care;
‘ Like its own beauty it design’d thee fair,
‘ And copied from the best lov’d angel there.

‘ The answers I made to these romantic encomiums, were silly enough I believe, and such as encouraged him to think I was too well pleased to be much offended at any thing he did. He kiss’d, — he clasped me to his bosom, still silencing my rebukes, by telling me how handsome I was, and how much he lov’d me; and that as opportunities of speaking to me were so difficult to be obtained, I must not think him too presuming if he made the most of this.

‘ What could I do? — how resist his pressures? The maid having put me to bed that night as usual, I had no time to dress myself again after I got up, so was in the most loose dishabille that can be imagin’d. His strength was far superior

' perior to mine; — there was no creature
 ' to come to my assistance: — the time,
 ' — the place — all joined to aid his
 ' wishes; — and with the bitterest regret
 ' and shame I now confess it, my own
 ' fond heart too much consented.

' In a word, my dear Miss Betsy, from
 ' one liberty he proceeded to another, 'till
 ' at last there was nothing left for him to
 ' ask, or me to grant.'

These last words were accompanied with
 a second flood of tears, which streamed in
 ' such abundance down her cheeks, that
 ' Miss Betsy was extremely moved: her
 ' good-nature made her pity the distress,
 ' tho' her virtue and understanding taught
 ' her to detest and despise the ill conduct
 ' which occasioned it: she wept and sigh'd
 ' in concert with her afflicted friend, and
 ' omitted nothing that she thought might
 ' contribute to assuage her sorrows.

Miss Forward was charmed with the
 generosity in Miss Betsy, and composed
 herself as much as possible, to make those
 acknowledgments it merited from her;
 and then proceeded to gratify her curiosity
 with that part of her adventures which yet
remain'd untold.

• When

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‘ Whenever I recollect, resumed she,
‘ how strangely, — how suddenly, — how
‘ almost unsolicited, I yielded up my ho-
‘ nour, some lines which I remember to
‘ have read somewhere, come into my
‘ mind, and seem, methinks, perfectly
‘ adapted to my circumstances. — They
‘ are these :

‘ Pleas’d with destruction, proud to be undone,
‘ With open arms I to my ruin run,
‘ And fought the mischiefs I was bid to shun :
‘ Tempted that shame a virgin ought to dread,
‘ And had not the excuse of being betray’d.

‘ Alas! I see my folly now, — my
‘ madness, — but was blind to it too long,
‘ I upbraided not my undoer ; — I re-
‘ monstrated not to him any of the ill
‘ consequences might possibly attend this
‘ transaction ; nor mentioned one word
‘ concerning how incumbent it was on
‘ him, to repair the injury he had done
‘ me by marriage : — sure never was there
‘ so infatuated a wretch ! morning be-
‘ gan to break in upon us, and the pang
‘ of being obliged to part, and the means
‘ of

• of meeting again, now took up all my
 • thoughts. Letting him in at midnight
 • was very dangerous, as old Nurse Win-
 • ter, who you know is very vapourish,
 • often fancies she hears noises in the
 • house, and rises to see if all the doors
 • and windows are fast: besides Mr. Wildly
 • told me, it was highly inconvenient for
 • him, being obliged to make a friend of
 • my lord ****'s porter to sit up for
 • him.

• I was almost at my wit's end, 'till he
 • recovered me by saying, he believed
 • there might be a more easy way for our
 • intercourse, than this nocturnal rendez-
 • vous." "Oh! what is that?" cried I
 • earnestly. "The Frenchwoman, re-
 • plied he, ~~she~~ ^{she} lives here, is good-
 • natured, and ~~of~~ ^{is} a very amorous com-
 • plexion; at least Sir John Shuffle, who
 • toy'd with her in my Lord's park, tells
 • me she is so; but, continued he, I
 • dare take his word; he knows your sex
 • perfectly, and I dare answer, if you
 • will get her to go abroad with you,
 • the consequence will be agreeable to
 • us all."

• What, said I would you have me
 • make her my confidante?" "Not al-
 • together so, said he; at least not 'till
 • you.

“ you are upon even terms with her ; I
“ mean, ’till you have secret for secret.

“ How can that be ? demanded I.”
“ Leave that to me, said he, do you only
“ get her out to-morrow a walking ; let
“ me know what time you think you can
“ best do it, and Sir John and I will meet
“ you as if by chance.” I told him I
“ would undertake to do it if the wea-
“ ther were fair, and that they might
“ meet us going towards the town, but it
“ must be past five, after she had given
“ her French lesson to the ladies. This
“ being agreed upon, we parted, though
“ not without the extremest reluctance ;
“ at least, I am sure on my side it was
“ sincerely so. I then went back with the
“ same precaution I had gone out, locked
“ all the doors softly, and got into my
“ chamber before any of the family were
“ stirring.

“ I was more than ordinarily civil to
“ mademoiselle all the next day : I said
“ every thing I could think on to flatter
“ her, and having got an opportunity of
“ speaking to her alone, “ Dear mademoi-
“ selle, said I, in a wheedling tone, I
“ have a great favour to beg of you.”
“ What is that, Miss ? replied she ; any
“ thing in my power you may command.”

‘ I then told her, I had got a whim in
 ‘ my head for a new tippet, and that I
 ‘ wanted her fancy in the choice of the
 ‘ colours.’ “ With all my heart, said
 ‘ she, and when we go out a walking this
 ‘ evening, we can call at the milliner’s,
 ‘ and buy the ribbands.” “ That will
 “ not do, cried I, I wou’d not have any
 “ of the ladies know any thing of the
 “ matter, ’till I have made it and got it
 “ on; so no-body must go with us.”
 “ Well, well, answer’d she, it shall be
 “ so; but I must tell the governess. —
 “ I know she will not be against humour-
 “ ing you in such a little fancy, and will
 “ send the other tutoress, or Nurse Win-
 “ ter, to wait upon the other ladies.” ‘ I
 ‘ told her she was very good, but enjoin’d
 ‘ her to beg the governess to keep it as a
 ‘ secret; for my tippet would be mighty
 ‘ pretty, and I wanted to surprise them
 ‘ with the sight of it.

‘ The governess, however, was so kind
 ‘ as to let us go somewhat before the time
 ‘ we expected, in order to prevent any
 ‘ one from offering to accompany us;
 ‘ but early as it was the two gentlemen
 ‘ were on the road. They accosted us
 ‘ with a great deal of complaisance:’
 “ What! my Diana of the forest! said
 “ *Sir John* to mademoiselle, am I so for-
 “ tunate

“tunate to see you once again?” “What
 “reply she made I do not know, being
 “speaking to Wildly at the same time;
 “but he also, by my instigations, made his
 “chief court to mademoiselle, and both
 “of them joined to intreat she would per-
 “mit them to lead her to some house of
 “entertainment: her refusals were very
 “faint, and perceiving, by my look, that
 “I was not very averse,” “What shall we
 “do, miss? said she to me, there is no
 “getting rid of these men. Shall we
 “venture to go with them? — ’Tis but
 “a frolic.” “I am under your direction,
 “mademoiselle; but I see no harm in it,
 “as to be sure, replied I, they are gentle-
 “men of honour.”

“In fine, we went into the first house
 “that had the prospect of affording us an
 “agreeable reception. It is not to be
 “doubted but we were treated with the best
 “the place we were in could supply; Sir
 “John declared the most flaming passion for
 “mademoiselle, and engross’d her so much
 “to himself, that Wildly had the liberty
 “of addressing me, without letting her see
 “his choice gave me the preference.

“Sir John after using mademoiselle
 “with some freedoms, which I could per-
 “ceive she did not greatly resent, told
 “her

“ her, there was an exceeding fine picture
 “ in the next room, and asked her to go
 “ and look upon it.” “ O! yes, replied
 “ she, I am extravagantly fond of paint-
 “ ing. Are not you, miss?” continued
 she to me with a careless air. “ No, said
 “ I, I had rather stay here, and look out
 “ of the window; but I would not hin-
 “ der this gentleman,” meaning Mr.
 “ Wildly, who replied, “ I have seen it
 “ already, so will stay and keep you
 “ company.”

“ I believe, indeed, we might have
 “ spared ourselves the trouble of these last
 “ speeches; for our companions seemed as
 “ little to expect as to desire we should
 “ follow them, but ran laughing, jump-
 “ ing, and skipping out of the room,
 “ utterly regardless of those they left be-
 “ hind.

“ Thus you see, my dear Miss Betsey,
 “ continued she, Wildly had, a second
 “ time, the opportunity of triumphing
 “ over the weakness of your unhappy
 “ friend. Oh! had it been the last, per-
 “ haps I had not been the wretch I am;
 “ but, alas! my folly ceased not here: I
 “ loved, — and every interview made him
 “ still dearer to me.

“ On

‘ On mademoiselle’s return, we begun
 ‘ to talk of going home: “ Bless me,
 ‘ cried I, ’tis now too late to go into
 ‘ town. What excuse shall we make to
 ‘ the governess for not having bought
 ‘ the ribbands?” “ I have already con-
 ‘ trived that, replied she, I will tell her,
 ‘ that the woman had none but ugly old-
 ‘ fashioned things, and expects a fresh
 ‘ parcel from London in two or three
 ‘ days.” “ O that is rare, cried I, that
 ‘ will be a charming pretence for our
 ‘ coming out again.” “ And a charm-
 ‘ ing opportunity for our meeting you
 ‘ again, said Sir John Shuffle.” “ If you
 ‘ have any inclination to lay hold of it,
 ‘ rejoined mademoiselle.” “ And you
 ‘ have courage to venture,” cried he.
 ‘ You see we are no cowards, answered
 ‘ she briskly.” “ Well then, name your
 ‘ day, said Wildly, if Sir John accepts
 ‘ the challenge, I will be his second; but
 ‘ I am afraid it cannot be till after Thurs-
 ‘ day, because my Lord talks of going
 ‘ to ****, and we cannot be back in less
 ‘ than three days.”

‘ Friday therefore was the day agreed
 ‘ upon, and we all four were punctual to
 ‘ the appointment. I shall not trouble
 ‘ you with the particulars of our conver-
 ‘ sation

' sation in this or any other of the meet-
 ' ings we had together, only tell you, that
 ' by the contrivance of one or other of
 ' us, we found means of coming together
 ' once or twice every week, during the
 ' whole time these gentlemen staid in the
 ' country, which was upwards of two
 ' months.

' On taking leave, I press'd Wildly to
 ' write to me under cover to mademoiselle
 ' Grenouille, which he promised to do,
 ' and I was silly enough to expect. Many
 ' posts arriving, without bringing any
 ' letter; I was sadly disappointed, and
 ' could not forbear expressing my concern
 ' to mademoiselle, who only laughed at
 ' me, and told me, I as yet knew no-
 ' thing of the world, nor the temper of
 ' mankind; — that a transient acquaint-
 ' tance, such as ours had been with these
 ' gentlemen ought to be forgot as soon as
 ' over; — that there was no great proba-
 ' bility we should ever see one another
 ' again, and it would be only a folly to
 ' keep up a correspondence by letters; —
 ' and added, that by this time they were,
 ' doubtless, entered into other engage-
 ' ments; and so might we too, said she,
 ' if the place and fashion we lived in did
 ' not prevent us.

‘ I found by this, and some other
 ‘ speeches of the like nature that it was
 ‘ the sex, not the person she regarded.
 ‘ I could not, however, be of her way of
 ‘ thinking. I really loved Mr. Wildly,
 ‘ and would have given the world, had I
 ‘ been mistress of it, to have seen him
 ‘ again ; but, as she said, indeed, there
 ‘ was no probability for my doing so ; and
 ‘ therefore I attempted, through her per-
 ‘ swasions, to make a virtue of necessity,
 ‘ and forget both him and all that passed
 ‘ between us. I should in the end, per-
 ‘ haps, have accomplished this point ; but
 ‘ oh ! I had a remembrancer within, which
 ‘ I did not presently know of. In fine,
 ‘ I had but too much reason to believe I
 ‘ was pregnant. — A thing which though
 ‘ a natural consequence of the folly I had
 ‘ been guilty of, never once entered into
 ‘ my head.

‘ Mademoiselle Grenouille seemed now
 ‘ terribly alarmed, on my communicating
 ‘ to her my suspicions on this score : she
 ‘ cried ’twas very unlucky ! — then paused,
 ‘ and ask’d what I would do, if it should
 ‘ really be as I fear’d ? I replied, that I
 ‘ knew not what course to take, for if
 ‘ my father should know it I was utterly
 ‘ undone ; I added, that he was a very
 VOL. I I austere

‘ austere man ; and besides I had a
 ‘ mother-in-law, who would not fail to
 ‘ say every thing she could to incense him
 ‘ against me.’

“ I see no recourse you have then,
 “ said she, but by taking physic to cause
 “ an abortion. You must pretend you
 “ are a little disordered, and send for an
 “ apothecary ; the sooner the better, for
 “ if it should become visible, all would
 “ infallibly be known, and we should both
 “ be ruined.”

‘ I was not so weak as not to see, that
 ‘ if any discovery were made, her share
 ‘ in the intrigue must come out, and she
 ‘ would be directly turned out of doors ;
 ‘ and that whatever concern she pretended
 ‘ for me, it was chiefly on her own ac-
 ‘ count : however, as I saw no other re-
 ‘ medy, was resolved to take her advice.

‘ Thus by having been guilty of one
 ‘ crime I was ensnared to commit another,
 ‘ of a yet fouler kind : one was the error
 ‘ of nature, this an offence against nature.
 ‘ The black design, however, succeeded
 ‘ not : I took potion after potion, yet still
 ‘ retained the token of my shame, which
 ‘ at length became too perspicuous for
 ‘ me

me to hope it would not be taken notice
of by all who saw me.

“ O heaven ! cried I, — Home did
“ you say ?—No ; I will never go home.
“ The grave is not so hateful to me, nor
“ death so terrible as my father’s pre-
“ sence.” “ I pity you from my soul,
“ said she, but what can you do ? There
“ will be no staying for you here, after
“ your condition is once known, and it
“ cannot be concealed much longer.”
“ These words, the truth of which I was
“ very well convinced of, drove me into
“ the last despair : I raved, — I tore my
“ hair,—I swore to poison, drown, or stab
“ myself, rather than live to have my

‘ shame exposed to the severity of my father, and reproaches of my kindred.’

“ Come, come, resumed, she, there is
 “ no need of such desperate remedies, you
 “ had better go to London, and have recourse to Wildly; who knows, as you
 “ are a gentleman’s daughter, and will
 “ have a fortune, but you may persuade
 “ him to marry you? if not, you can
 “ oblige him to take care of you in your
 “ lying-in, and to keep the child: and
 “ when you are once got rid of your burden,
 “ then, some excuse or other may be found
 “ for your elopement.”

“ But how shall I get to London? resumed I, how find out my undoer in
 “ a place I knew nothing of, nor ever
 “ have been at? Of whom shall I enquire? I am ignorant of what family
 “ he is, or even where he lives.” “ As
 “ to that, replied she, I will undertake to
 “ inform myself of every thing necessary
 “ for you to know, and if you resolve to
 “ go I will set about it directly.” I then
 “ told her, I would do any thing rather
 “ than be exposed; on which she bid me
 “ assume as chearful a countenance as I
 “ could, and depend on her bringing me
 “ some intelligence of Wildly before I slept.

‘ The

' The method she took to make good
 ' her promise, was, it seems, to send a
 ' person whom she cou'd confide in to the
 ' seat of lord ****, to enquire among the
 ' servants where Mr. Wildly, who had
 ' lately been a guest there, might be found.
 ' She told me, that the answer they gave
 ' the man was, that they knew not where
 ' he lodged, but that he might be heard
 ' of at any of the coffee-houses about St.
 ' James's. As I was altogether a stranger
 ' in London, this information gave me
 ' but little satisfaction; but mademoiselle
 ' Grenouille, whose interest it was to hurry
 ' me away, assured me that she knew that
 ' part of the town perfectly well, having
 ' lived there several months on her first
 ' arrival in England? — that there were
 ' several great coffee-houses there, fre-
 ' quented by all the gentlemen of fashion,
 ' and that nothing would be more easy
 ' than to find Mr. Wildly at one or other
 ' of them. My heart, however, shuddered
 ' at the thoughts of this enterprize, yet
 ' her persuasions, joined to the terrors I
 ' was in of being exposed, and the cer-
 ' tainty that a discovery of my condition
 ' was inevitable, made me resolve to un-
 ' dertake it.

‘ Nothing now remained but the means
 ‘ how I should get away, so as to avoid
 ‘ the pursuit which might, doubtless, be-
 ‘ made after me; which, after some consul-
 ‘ tation, was thus contrived and executed :

‘ A flying coach set out from H———
 ‘ every Monday at two o’clock in the
 ‘ morning; mademoiselle Grenouille en-
 ‘ gaged the same man, who had enquired
 ‘ at Lord ****’s for Mr. Wildly, to secure
 ‘ a place for me in it. The Sunday be-
 ‘ fore I was to go I pretended indisposi-
 ‘ tion to avoid going to church : I passed
 ‘ that time in packing up the best of my
 ‘ things in a large bundle ; for I had no
 ‘ opportunity of taking a box or trunk
 ‘ with me. My greatest difficulty was
 ‘ how to get out of bed from Miss Bab,
 ‘ who still lay with me, I thought, how-
 ‘ ever, that if she happened to awake
 ‘ while I was rising, I would tell her I
 ‘ was not very well, and was only going
 ‘ into the next room, to open the widow
 ‘ for a little air ; but I stood in no need
 ‘ of this precaution, she was in a sound
 ‘ sleep, and I left my bed, put on the
 ‘ cloaths I was to travel in, took up my
 ‘ bundle and stole out of the room, with-
 ‘ out her perceiving any thing of the mat-
 ‘ ter. I went out by the same way by
 ‘ which

' which I had fulfilled my first fatal ap-
 ' pointment with Mr. Wildly ; at a little
 ' distance from the garden-door, I found
 ' the friend of mademoiselle Grenouille,
 ' who waited for me with a horse and pil-
 ' lion ; he took my bundle before, and me
 ' behind him, and then we made the best
 ' of our way towards H———, where we
 ' arrived time enough for the coach. I
 ' alighted at the door of the inn, and he
 ' rode off directly to avoid being seen by
 ' any body, who might describe him, in
 ' case an enquiry should be made.

' I will not trouble you with the parti-
 ' culars of my journey, nor how I was
 ' amazed on entering this great metro-
 ' polis ; I shall only tell you, that it be-
 ' ing dark when we came in, I lay that
 ' night at the inn, and the next morning,
 ' following the directions mademoiselle
 ' Grenouille had given me, took a hack-
 ' ney coach, and ordered the man to drive
 ' into any of the streets about St. James's,
 ' and stop at the first house where he
 ' should see a bill upon the door for ready
 ' furnished lodgings. It happened to be
 ' in Rider-street ; the woman at first
 ' seemed a little scrupulous of taking me,
 ' as I was a stranger and had no recom-
 ' mendation ; but on my telling her I
 ' would pay her a fortnight beforehand,

‘ we agreed at the rate of twelve shillings
‘ a week.

‘ The first thing I did was to send a
‘ porter to the coffee-houses, where he
‘ easily heard of him, but brought me
‘ the vexatious intelligence that he was
‘ gone to Tunbridge, and it was not
‘ known when he would return. This
‘ was a very great misfortune to me, and
‘ the more so as I had very little money :
‘ I thought it best, however, to follow
‘ him thither, which I did the same
‘ week.

‘ But, oh, ! my dear Miss Betsy, how
‘ unlucky every thing happened ; he had
‘ left that place the very morning before
‘ I arrived, and gone for London. I
‘ had nothing now to do but return ; but
‘ was so disorder’d with the fatigues I had
‘ undergone, that I was obliged to stay
‘ four days to compose myself. When I
‘ came back I sent immediately to the
‘ coffee-house ; but how shall I express
‘ the distraction I was in, when I was told
‘ he had lain but one night in town, and
‘ was gone to Bath.

‘ This second disappointment was ter-
‘ rible indeed : I had but half-a-crown re-
‘ maining of the little stock I brought
‘ from

' from the boarding-school, and had no
 ' way to procure a supply but by selling
 ' my watch, which I did to a goldsmith
 ' in the neighbourhood, for what he was
 ' pleased to give me, and then set out for
 ' Bath by the first coach.

' Here I had the good fortune to meet
 ' him; he was strangely surpris'd at the
 ' sight of me in that place, but much
 ' more so when I told him what had
 ' brought me there: he seem'd extremely
 ' concern'd at the accident. But when I
 ' mention'd marriage, he plainly told
 ' me, I must not think of such a thing;
 ' that he was not in circumstances to sup-
 ' port a family; — that having lost the
 ' small fortune, left him by his friends,
 ' at play, he was oblig'd to have recourse
 ' for his present subsistence, to the very
 ' means by which he had been undone:
 ' in short, that he was a gamester. The
 ' name startl'd me: treat'd as I had al-
 ' ways heard it, with the utmost contempt,
 ' I could not reconcile how such a one
 ' came to be the guest and companion of
 ' a lord; though I have since heard, that
 ' men of that profession frequently receive
 ' these favours from the nobility, which
 ' are deny'd to persons of more unblemish-
 ' ed characters.

' Wildly, however, it is certain, had
 ' some notions of honour and good-na-
 ' ture ; he assured me he would do all in
 ' his power to protect me ; but added,
 ' that he had been very unfortunate of
 ' late, and that I must wait for a lucky
 ' chance, before he could afford me any
 ' supply.

' I staid at Bath all the time he was
 ' there : he visited me every day ; but I
 ' lived on my own money 'till we came
 ' to town, when my time being very near,
 ' he brought me to the place you find
 ' me in, having, it seems, agreed with
 ' the woman of the house for a certain
 ' sum of money to support me during my
 ' lying-in, and keep the child as long as
 ' it should live. The miseries I have suf-
 ' tained during my abode with this old
 ' hag, would be too tedious to repeat.
 ' The only joy I have is, that the wretched
 ' infant died in three days after its birth,
 ' so has escaped the woes which children
 ' thus exposed are doom'd to bear. Wildly
 ' has taken his last leave of me, and I
 ' have wrote to an aunt, entreating her to
 ' endeavour to obtain my father's forgive-
 ' ness. I pretended to her that I left
 ' ————e for no other reason than
 ' cause I had an ardent desire to see
 ' London ;

‘ London ; and, as I think, no-body can
 ‘ reveal to him the true cause, have some
 ‘ hopes of not being utterly abandoned by
 ‘ him.’

Here this unfortunate creature finished her long narrative, and Miss Betsy saw her in too much affliction to express any thing that might increase it: she only thanked her for reposing a confidence in her, “ which, said she, may be of great
 “ service to me some time or other.”

Before they parted Miss Forward said, she had gone in debt to Mrs. Nightshade, for some few things she wanted, over and above what is generally allowed in such cases, and had been affronted by her for not being able to discharge it, therefore intreated Miss Betsy to lend her twenty shillings; on which the generous and sweet tempered young lady immediately drew her purse, and after giving her the sum she demanded, put two guineas more into her hand: “ Be pleased to accept
 “ this, said she, you may possibly want
 “ something after having paid your debt.” The other thank’d her, and told her, she doubted not but her aunt would send her something, and she would then repay it.
 “ I shall give myself no pain about that,”

“said Miss Betsy,” and then took her leave, desiring she would let her know by a letter what success she had with her friends. Miss Forward told her, she might depend not only on hearing from her, but seeing her again, as soon as she had any thing to acquaint her with,



CHAP. XV.

Brings many things on the carpet, highly pleasing to Miss Betsy, in their beginning, and no less perplexing to her in their consequences.

THE accounts of those many and dreadful misfortunes which the ill conduct of Miss Forward had drawn upon her, made Miss Betsy extremely pensive. ‘Tis strange, said she to herself that a woman cannot indulge herself in the liberty of conversing freely with a man, without being persuaded by him to do every thing he would have her.’ She thought, however, that some excuse might be made for Miss Forward, on the score of her being strictly debarred from all acquaintance with the other sex. ‘People,’ cried she, have naturally an inclination to do what they are most forbid. The poor

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‘ poor girl had a curiosity to hear herself
‘ addressed, and having no opportunity of
‘ gratifying that passion, but by admitting
‘ her lover at so odd a time and place,
‘ was indeed too much in his power to
‘ have withstood her ruin, even if she had
‘ been mistress of more courage and reso-
‘ lution than she was.’

On meditating on the follies which wo-
men are sometimes prevailed upon to be
guilty of, the discovery she had made of
Miss Flora’s intrigue with Gayland came
fresh into her mind. ‘ What, said she,
‘ could induce her to sacrifice her honour ?
‘ Declarations of love were not new to
‘ her. She heard every day the flatteries
‘ with which our sex are treated by the
‘ men, and needed not to have purchased
‘ the assiduities of any one of them at so
‘ dear a rate. Good God ! are innocence
‘ and the pride of conscious virtue, things
‘ of so little estimation, as to be thrown
‘ away for the trifling pleasure of hearing
‘ a few tender protestations ? perhaps all
‘ false, and uttered by one whose heart
‘ despises the easy fondness he has tri-
‘ umphed over, and ridicules the very
‘ grant of what he has so earnestly sol-
‘ licited !’

It is certain this young lady had the highest notions of honour and virtue, and whenever she gave herself time to reflect, looked on every thing that had a tendency to make an encroachment on them with the most extreme detestation ; yet had she good-nature enough to pity those faults in others, she thought it impossible for her to be once guilty of herself.

But, amidst sentiments as noble, and as generous, as ever heart was possessed of, vanity, that foible of her soul, crept in, and would have its share. She had never been thoroughly attacked in a dishonourable way, but by Gayland, and the gentleman commoner at Oxford ; both which she rebuffed with a becoming disdain. In this she secretly exulted, and had that dependence on her power of repelling all the efforts, come they in what shape soever, that should be made against her virtue, that she thought it beneath her to behave so as not to be in danger of incurring them.

How great a pity it is, that a mind endued with so many excellent qualities, and which had such exalted ideas of what is truly valuable in womankind, should be *tainted with a frailty of so fatal a nature,*

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as to expose her to temptations, which if she were not utterly undone, it must be owing rather to the interposition of her guardian angel, than to the strength of human reason : but of that hereafter ; at present there were none had any base designs upon her ; we must shew what success those gentlemen met with, who addressed her with the most pure and honourable intentions : of this number we shall speak first of Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple ; the one, as has been already said, strenuously recommended by her brother, the other by Mr. Goodman.

Mr. Staple had the good fortune (if it may be called so) to be the first of these two who had the opportunity of declaring his passion : the journey of the other to London having been retarded two days longer than he intended.

This gentleman having Mr. Goodman's leave, made a second visit at his house. Lady Mollasin and Miss Flora knowing on what business he was come, made an excuse for leaving him and Miss Betsy together. He made his addresses to her in the forms which lovers usually observe on the first declaration : and she replied to what he said, in a manner not to to encour-

rage him too much, nor yet to take from him all hope.

While they were discoursing a footman came in, and told her a gentleman from Oxford desired to speak with her, having some commands from her brother to deliver to her. Mr. Staple supposing they had business took his leave, and Mr. Truworth, for it was he indeed, was introduced,

“ Madam,” said he, saluting her with the utmost respect, “ I have many obligations to Mr. Thoughtless ; but none which demands so large a portion of my gratitude, as the honour he has conferred upon me in presenting you with this letter.” To which she replied, that her brother must certainly have a great confidence in his goodness, to give him this trouble. With these words she took the letter out of his hand, and having obliged him to seat himself : “ You will pardon, sir, said she, the rudeness which my impatience to receive the commands of so near and dear a relation makes me guilty of.” He made no other answer to these words than a low bow, and she withdrew to a window, and found the contents of her brother’s letter were these :

To

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

• My dear sister,

• I SHALL leave Oxford to-morrow,
• in order to cross the country for the seat
• of Sir Ralph Trusty, as I suppose Mr.
• Goodman will inform you, I having
• wrote to him by the post ; but the most
• valuable of my friends being going to
• London, and expressing a desire of re-
• newing that acquaintance he had begun
• to commence with you here, I have
• taken the liberty of troubling him with
• the delivery of this to you. He is a
• gentleman whose merits you are yet a
• stranger to ; but I have so good an opi-
• nion of your penetration, as to be confi-
• dent a very little time will convince you,
• that he is deserving all the esteem in
• your power to regard him with : in the
• mean time doubt not but you will re-
• ceive him as a person whose success, in
• every thing, is much desired by him,
• who is,

• With the tenderest good wishes,

• Dear sister,

• Your most affectionate brother,

• F. THOUGHTLESS.

As she did not doubt but, by the stile and manner of this letter, that it had been seen by Mr. Truworth, she could not keep herself from blushing, which he observing as he sat flattered himself with taking as a good omen. He had too much awe upon him, however, to make any declarations of his passion at the first visit, neither, indeed, had he an opportunity of doing it; Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora, thinking they had left Mr. Staple and Miss Betsey a sufficient time together, came into the room: the former was surprised to find he was gone, and a strange gentleman in his place; but Miss Flora remembering him perfectly well, they saluted each other with the freedom of persons who were not entire strangers; they entered into a conversation, and other company coming in, Mr. Truworth had an opportunity of displaying the fine talents he was master of: his travels, — the observations he had made on the curiosities he had seen abroad, particularly at Rome, Florence, and Naples, were highly entertaining to the company: on taking leave he told the ladies, he hoped they would allow him the favour of making one at their tea-table sometimes, while he remained in London: to which Lady Mellasin and her daughter, *little suspecting the motive he had for this request,*

request, joined in assuring him, he could not come too often, and that they should expect to see him every day ; but Miss Betsy looking on herself as chiefly concerned in his admission, modestly added to what they had said, only that a person so much, and she doubted not but so justly, esteemed by her brother, might be certain of a sincere welcome from her.

Every body was full of the praises of this gentleman, and Miss Betsy, though she said the least of any one, thought her brother had not bestowed more on him than he really deserved. Mr. Goodman coming home soon after, there appeared some marks of displeasure in his countenance, which, as he was the best humoured man in the world, very much surprised those of his family ; but the company not being all retired, none of them seemed to take any notice of it, and went on with the conversation they were upon before his entrance.

The visitors, however, were no sooner gone, than without staying to be asked, he immediately let them into the occasion of his being so much ruffled : “ Miss Betsy, (said he) “ you have used me very ill : I “ did not think you would have made a
“ fool

" fool of me in the manner you have
 " done." " Bless me, sir, (cried she)
 " in what have I offended?" " You
 " have not only offended against me,
 (answered he, very hastily) " but also
 " against your own reason, and common
 " understanding: you are young, 'tis
 " true, yet not so young as not to know
 " it is both ungenerous and silly to impose
 " upon your friends." " I scorn the
 " thought, sir, of imposing upon any body,
 (said she) " I therefore desire, sir, you
 " will tell me what you mean by so unjust
 " an accusation." " Unjust! (resumed he)
 " I appeal to the whole world, if it were
 " well done of you to suffer me to encour-
 " age my friend's courtship to you, when
 " at the same time your brother had en-
 " gaged you to receive the addresses of
 " another."

Miss Betsy, though far from thinking it
 a fault in her to hear the proposals of
 a hundred lovers, had as many offered
 themselves, was yet a little shocked at the
 reprimand given her by Mr. Goodman,
 and not being able presently to make any
 reply to what he had said, he took a letter
 he had just received from her brother out
 of his pocket, and threw it on the table,
 with these words: " That will shew,
 (said he) " whether I have not cause to
 " resent

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“resent your behaviour in this point.”
Perceiving she was about to take it up,
“Hold, (cried he) my wife shall read it,
“and be the judge between us.”

Lady Mellasin, who had not spoke all this time, then took the letter, and read aloud the contents, which were these :

To Mr. GOODMAN.

‘ S I R,

‘ THIS comes to let you know I
‘ have received the remittances you were
‘ so obliging to send me. I think to set
‘ out to-morrow for L———e, but
‘ shall not stay there for any length of
‘ time : my intentions for going into the
‘ army are the same as when I last wrote to
‘ you, and the more I consider on that
‘ affair, the more I am confirmed that a
‘ military life is most suitable of any to
‘ my genius and humour ; if therefore,
‘ you can hear of any thing proper for
‘ me, either in the guards, or in a march-
‘ ing regiment, against I come to town,
‘ I shall be infinitely thankful for the
‘ trouble you take in the enquiry ; but,
‘ sir, this is not all the favours I have to
‘ ask of you at present. A gentleman of
‘ family, fortune, and character, has seen
‘ my sister, likes her, and is going to
‘ London

‘ London, on no other business than to
 ‘ make his addresses to her. I have al-
 ‘ ready wrote to her on this subject, and
 ‘ I believe she will pay some regard to
 ‘ what I have said in his behalf. I am
 ‘ very well assured she can never have a
 ‘ more advantageous offer, as to his cir-
 ‘ cumstances, nor be united to a man of
 ‘ more true honour, morality and sweet-
 ‘ nefs of disposition ; all which I have had
 ‘ frequent occasions of being an eye-wit-
 ‘ nefs of : but she is young, gay, and as
 ‘ yet, perhaps, not altogether so capable as
 ‘ I could wish of knowing what will make
 ‘ for her real happiness : I therefore intreat
 ‘ you, sir, as the long experienced friend
 ‘ of our family, to forward this match,
 ‘ both by your advice, and whatever else
 ‘ is in your power, which certainly will be
 ‘ the greatest act of goodness you can
 ‘ confer on her, as well as the highest obli-
 ‘ gation to a brother, who wishes nothing
 ‘ more than to see her secured from all
 ‘ temptations, and well settled in the
 ‘ world. I am,

‘ With the greatest respect,

‘ S I R,

‘ Your most humble,

‘ And most obedient servant,

‘ F. THOUGHTLESS.

‘ P. S.

‘ P. S. I had forgot to inform you, fir,
 ‘ that the name of the gentleman I take
 ‘ the liberty of recommending with so
 ‘ much warmth, is Truworth ; that he
 ‘ is descended from the ancient Britons
 ‘ by the father’s side, and by the mother’s
 ‘ from the honourable and well known
 ‘ Oldcastle’s, in Kent.’

“ O, fye Miss Betsy, (said Lady Mellafin) “ how could you serve Mr. Goodman
 “ so ? What will Mr. Staple say, when he
 “ comes to know he was encouraged to
 “ court a woman that was already pre-
 “ engaged.” “ Pre-engaged, madam,
 (cried Miss Betsy, in a scornful tone)
 “ what to a man I never saw but three
 “ times in my whole life, and whose mouth
 “ never uttered a syllable of love to me.”
 She was going on, but Mr. Goodman, who
 was still in a great heat, interrupted her,
 saying, “ No matter whether he has ut-
 “ tered any thing of the business, or not,
 “ it seems you are enough acquainted
 “ with his sentiments, and I doubt not
 “ but he knows you are, or he would
 “ not have taken a journey to London
 “ on your account. You ought therefore
 “ to have told me of his coming, and what
 “ your brother had wrote concerning him,
 “ and I should then have let Mr. Staple
 “ know

“ know it would be to no purpose to
 “ make any courtship to you, as I did to
 “ another just before I came home, who
 “ I find has taken a great fancy to you ;
 “ but I have given him an answer ; for
 “ my part I do not understand this way
 “ of making gentlemen lose their time.”

'Tis probable these last words nettled Miss Betsy more than all the rest he had said : she imagined herself secure of the hearts of both Truworth and Staple, but was vexed to the heart to have lost the addresses of a third admirer, through the scrupulousness of Mr. Goodman, who she looked upon to have nothing to do with her affairs in this particular : she was too cunning, however, to let him see what her thoughts were on this occasion, and only said that he might do as he pleased ; — that she did not want a husband ; — that all men were alike to her ; — but added, that it seemed strange to her, that a young woman who had her fortune to make might not be allowed to hear all the different proposals that should be offered to her on that score, and with these words flung out of the room, and went up into her chamber, nor would be prevailed upon to come down again that night, though Miss Flora, and Mr. Goodman him-

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himself, repenting he had said so much, called to her for that purpose.

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CHAP. XVI.

Presents the reader with the name and character of Miss Betsy's third lover, and also with some other particulars.

THOUGH Lady Mellasin had seem'd to blame Miss Betsy for not having communicated to Mr. Goodman what her brother wrote to her in relation to Mr. Truworth, yet in her heart she was far from being averse to her receiving a plurality of lovers, because whenever that young lady should fix her choice, there was a possibility some one or other of those she rejected might transmit his addresses to her daughter, who she was extremely desirous of getting married, and had never yet been once solicited on honourable terms : — she therefore told her husband, that he ought not to hinder Miss Betsy from hearing what every gentleman had to offer, to the end she might accept that which had the prospect of most advantage to her.

Mr. Goodman in this, as in every thing else, suffer'd himself to be directed by her judgment, and the next morning, when Miss Betsey came down, talk'd to her with his usual pleasantry. — “ Well, said he, “ have you forgiven my ill humour last “ night ? I was a little vexed to think my “ friend Staple had so poor a chance for “ gaining you, and the more so, because “ Frank Thoughtless will take it ill of “ me, that I have done any thing in op- “ position to the person he recommends : “ but you must act as you please ; for “ my part I shall not meddle any farther “ in these affairs.”

“ Sir, replied Miss Betsey, very gravely, “ I shall always be thankful to my friends “ for their advice, and whenever I think “ seriously of a husband shall not fail to “ intreat yours in my choice ! but, conti- “ nued she, one would imagine my bro- “ ther, by writing so pressingly to you, “ wanted to hurry me into a marriage “ whether I would or no ; and though I “ have as much regard for him, as a sister “ can or ought to have, yet I shall never “ be prevailed upon by him to enter into “ a state to which at present I have rather “ an aversion than inclination.

“ That

“ That is, said Mr. Goodman, you
 “ have rather an aversion, than an inclina-
 “ tion to the persons who address you on
 “ that score.” “ No, sir, answered she,
 “ not at all ; the persons and behaviour,
 “ both of Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple,
 “ appear to me to be unexceptionable ;
 “ but sure one may allow a man to
 “ have merit, and be pleased with his
 “ conversation, without desiring to be
 “ tack’d to him for ever. I very believe
 “ I shall never be in love ; but if I am,
 “ it must be a long length of time, and
 “ a series of persevering assiduities must
 “ make me so.

Mr. Goodman told her these were only
 romantic notions; which he doubted not
 but a little time would cure her of. What
 reply Miss Betsy would have made is un-
 certain, for the discourse was interrupted
 by a footman delivering a letter to her, in
 which she found these lines :

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ FAIR CREATURE,

“ I AM no courtier, — no beau, — and
 “ have hitherto had but little communica-
 “ tion with your sex ; but I am honest
 “ and sincere, and you may depend on

' the truth of what I say. I have, Heaven
 ' be praised, acquired a very large fortune,
 ' and for some time have had thoughts
 ' of marrying, to the end I might have a
 ' son to enjoy the fruits of my labours,
 ' after I am food either for the fishes or
 ' the worms : — it is no great matter
 ' which of them. Now I have been
 ' wish'd to several fine women, but my
 ' fancy gives the preference to you; and
 ' if you can like me as well, we shall be
 ' very happy together. I spoke to your
 ' guardian yesterday, for I love to be
 ' above-board; but he seem'd to lour, or,
 ' as we say at sea, to be a little hazy on
 ' the matter, so I thought I would not
 ' trouble him any farther, but write di-
 ' rectly to you. I hear there are two about
 ' you; but what of that; I have doubled
 ' the Cape of Good Hope many a time,
 ' and never failed of reaching my intend-
 ' ed port; I therefore see no cause why I
 ' should apprehend a wreck by land. I
 ' am turn'd of eight and forty, 'tis true,
 ' which may-be you may think too old;
 ' but I must tell you, dear pretty one,
 ' that I have a constitution that will wear
 ' out twenty of your washy pamper'd
 ' landmen of not half my age. Whatever
 ' your fortune is I will settle accordingly,
 ' and moreover will secure something
 ' *handsome* to you at my decease, in case
 ' you

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‘ you should chance to be the longest liver.
‘ I know you young women do not care
‘ a man should have any thing under your
‘ hand, so expect no answer; but desire
‘ you will consider on my proposals, and
‘ let me know your mind this evening at
‘ five o’clock, when I shall come to Mr.
‘ Goodman’s, let him take it how he will.
‘ I can weather out any storm to come at
‘ you, and sincerely am,

‘ Dear foul,

‘ Your most faithful,

‘ And affectionate lover,

‘ J. HYSOM.’

There were some passages in this letter that set Miss Betsy into such immoderate fits of laughter, as made her a long time in going through it. Hav’nig finish’d the whole, she turn’d to Mr. Goodman, and putting it into his hands, — ‘ Be pleased, “ sir, to read that, said she; you shall “ own, at least, that I do not make a secret “ of all my lovers to you.” Mr. Goodman soon look’d it over, and after returning it to her, “ How troublesome a thing “ it is, said he, to be the guardian to a “ beautiful young lady! whether I grant,

“ or whether I refuse the consent required
 “ of me, I equally gain ill-will from one
 “ side or the other.”

Lady Mellasin, who had all this morning complain'd of a violent head-ach, and said nothing during this conversation, now cried out, “ What new conquest is this
 “ Miss Betsey has made?” “ O, madam,
 “ replied Miss Betsey, your ladyship shall
 “ judge of the value of it, by the doughty
 “ epistle I have just received.” With these words she gave the letter to Miss Flora, desiring her to read it aloud, which she did, but was obliged, as Miss Betsey herself had done, to stop several times; and hold her sides, before she got to the conclusion, and Lady Mellasin, as little as she was then inclined to mirth, could not forbear smiling to hear the manner in which this declaration of love was penn'd. “ You are all very merry,
 “ said Mr. Goodman ; but I can tell you,
 “ Captain Hysom is a match that many a
 “ fine lady in this town would jump at;
 “ he has been twenty-five years in the service of the East-India company, has
 “ made very successful voyages, and is
 “ immensely rich : he has lived at sea,
 “ indeed, the greatest part of his life, and
 “ much politeness cannot be expected
 “ from him ; but, he is a very honest
 “ good-

“ good-natured man, and I believe means
 “ well. I wish he had offer’d himself to
 “ Flora.” “ Perhaps, sir, I should not
 “ have refused him, replied she, briskly;
 “ I should like a husband prodigiously
 “ that would be abroad for the whole
 “ years together, and leave me to bowl
 “ about in my coach and six, while he
 “ ploughed the ocean in search of new
 “ treasures to throw into my lap at his
 “ return ”

“ Well, well, said Miss Betsy, laugh-
 “ ing still more) who knows but when I
 “ have seized him a little, he may fly
 “ for shelter to your more clement good-
 “ ness.” “ Aye, aye, cried Mr. Good-
 “ man, you are a couple of mad-caps, in-
 “ deed, and I suppose between you both
 “ the captain will be finely managed; but
 “ no matter, I shall not pity him, as I
 “ partly told him what he might expect.”

After this Mr. Goodman went out, and
 the young ladies went up to dress against
 dinner, diverting themselves all the time
 with the poor captain’s letter. Miss Betsy
 told Miss Flora, that as he was for coming
 so directly to the point, she must use all
 her artifice, in order to keep him in sus-
 pence, “ For, said she, if I should let him
 “ know any part of my real sentiments

“ concerning him, he would be gone at
 “ once, and we should lose all our sport :
 “ I will therefore, continued she, make
 “ him believe that I dare not openly en-
 “ courage his pretensions, because my bro-
 “ ther hath recommended one gentleman
 “ to me, and Mr. Goodman another; but
 “ shall assure him at the same time,
 “ that I am inclined to neither of them,
 “ and shall contrive to get rid of them
 “ both as soon as possible: this, said she,
 “ will keep him in hopes, without my
 “ downright promising any thing in his
 “ particular favour.”

Miss Flora told her, she was a perfect
 Machiavel in love-affairs, and was about
 to say something more, when a confused
 sound of several voices, among which she
 distinguish'd that of Lady Mellasin very
 loud, made her run down stairs to see
 what was the occasion; but Miss Betsy
 staid in the chamber, being busily em-
 ploy'd in something belonging to her dress,
 or had she been less engaged, it is not
 probable she would have troubled herself
 about the matter, as she supposed it only
 a quarrel between Lady Mellasin and some
 of the servants, as in effect it was, and
 she, without asking, was immediately in-
 formed.

Nanny

Nanny, the upper house-maid, and the same who had deliver'd Mr. Saving's letter to Miss Betsy, and carried her answer to him, coming up with a broom in her hand, in order to sweep her lady's dressing-room, ran into the chamber of Miss Betsy, and seeing that she was alone "Oh, Miss! said she, there is the devil to do below." "I heard a sad noise, indeed," (said she carelessly)." "Why you must know Miss, cried the maid, that my lady hath given John the butler warning, and so his time being up, Mrs. Prinks hath orders to pay him off this morning, but would have stopped thirty shillings for a silver orange-strainer that is missing John would not allow it, and being in a passion, told Mrs. Prinks that he would not leave the house without his full wages; that for any thing he knew, the strainer might be gone after the diamond necklace. This, I suppose, she repeated to my lady, and that put her in so ill a humour this morning, that if my master had not come down as he did, we should all have had something at our heads. However, continued the wench, she ordered Mrs. Prinks to give him his whole money; but would you believe it Miss? my master was no sooner gone out, than

" she

“ she came down into the kitchen raving,
 “ and finding John there still, (the poor
 “ fellow, God knows, only staid to take
 “ his leave of us,) she tore about, and
 “ swore we should all go; accused one of
 “ one thing and another of another.”—
 “ Well, but what did the fellow mean
 “ about the diamond necklace, cried Miss
 “ Betsey, interrupting her.” “ I will tell
 “ you the whole story, said she; but you
 “ must promise never to speak a word of
 “ it to any body; for though I do not
 “ value the place, nor will stay much
 “ longer, yet they would not give one a
 “ character, you know, Miss.”

Miss Betsey then having assured her, she
 would never mention it, the other shut the
 door, and went on in a very low voice, in
 this manner.

“ Don’t you remember, Miss, said she,
 “ what a flurry my lady and Mrs. Prinks
 “ were in one day? how her ladyship
 “ pulled off all her fine cloaths, and they
 “ both went out in a hackney-coach;
 “ then Mrs. Prinks came home, and went
 “ out again?” “ Yes, replied Miss Betsey,
 “ I took notice they were both in a good
 “ deal of confusion.” “ Aye, Miss, well
 “ they might, said Nanny; that very after-
 “ noon John was gone to see a cousin
 “ that

“ that keeps a pawnbroker’s shop in
 “ Thieving-lane, and as he was sitting in
 “ a little room behind the counter, that
 “ it seems shuts in with glass doors, who
 “ should he see through the window, but
 “ Mrs. Prinks come in; she brought my
 “ Lady’s diamond necklace, and pledged
 “ it for a hundred and twenty, or a hun-
 “ dred and thirty guineas, I am not sure
 “ which he told me, for I have the saddest
 “ memory; but it is no matter for that,
 “ John was strangely confounded, as you
 “ may think, but resolved to see into
 “ the bottom, and when Mrs. Prinks was
 “ got into the coach, popped up behind
 “ it, and got down when it stopped,
 “ which was at the sign of the hand and
 “ tipstaff in Knaves-acre; so that this
 “ money was raised to get somebody that
 “ was arrested out of the bailiff’s hands,
 “ for John said it was what they call a
 “ spunging-house that Mrs. Prinks went
 “ into. Lord! how deceitful some people
 “ are; my poor master little thinks how
 “ his money goes; but I’ll warrant our
 “ house-keeping must suffer for this.

This gossiping young huffy would have
 run on much longer, doubtless, with her
 comments on this affair; but hearing
 Miss Flora’s foot upon the stairs, she left
 off, and opening the door, softly slipped into

her lady's dressing-room, and fell to work in cleaning it.

Miss Flora came up, exclaiming on the ill behaviour of most servants, telling Miss Betsey what a passion her mamma had been in. The other made little answer to what she said on that or any other score, having her thoughts very much taken up with the account just given her by Nanny; she recollected that Lady Mellasin had never dress'd since that day, always making some excuse to avoid paying any grand visits, which she now doubted not but it was because she had not her necklace. It very much amazed her, as she well knew her ladyship was not without a good deal of ready cash, therefore was certain the sum must be large indeed, for which her friend was arrested, that it reduced her to the necessity of applying to a pawnbroker, and who that friend could be for whom she would thus demean herself, puzzled her extremely. It was not long, however, before she was let into the secret, but in the mean time other matters of more moment must be treated on.



C H A P. XVII.

Is of less importance than the former, yet must not be omitted.

LADY Mellasin having vented her spleen on those, who, by their frictions, were obliged to bear it, and the object of it removed out of the house, became extremely chearful the remaining part of the day. The fashion in which it might be supposed Miss Betsy would be accosted by the tarpaulin enamorado, and the reception she would give his passion, occasion'd a good deal of merriment, and even Mr. Goodman, seeing his dear wife took part in it, would sometimes throw in his joke.

“ Well, well, (cry'd Miss Betsy, to heighten the diversion) what will you say now, if I should take a fancy to the captain, so far as to prefer him to any of those who think it worth their while to solicit me on the score of love ?”

“ This is quite ungenerous in you, (cry'd Miss Flora) did you not promise to turn the captain over to me, when you had done with him ?” — “ That
“ may

“ may not happen a great while, replied
 “ the other ; for I assure you I have seen
 “ him three or four times, when he has
 “ called here on business to Mr. Good-
 “ man, and think to part with a lover
 “ of his formidable aspect would be to
 “ deprive myself of the most conspicuous
 “ of my whole train of admirers : — but
 “ suppose, (continued she, in the same
 “ gay strain) I resign to you Mr. Staple
 “ or Mr. Truworth, would not that do
 “ as well ?”

“ Do not put me in the head of either
 “ of them, I beseech you, said Miss Flora
 “ for fear I should think too seriously on
 “ the matter, and it should not be in
 “ your power to oblige me.”

“ All that must be left to chance, cried
 “ Miss Betsy ; but so far I dare promise
 “ you, as to do enough to make them
 “ heartily weary of their courtship to me,
 “ and at liberty to make their addresses
 “ elsewhere.”

After this they fell into some conver-
 sation concerning the merits of the two
 last-mentioned gentlemen :—they allow’d
 Mr. Staple, to have the finest face, and
 at Mr. Truworth was the best shaped,
 and had the most graceful air in every
 thing

thing he did : — Mr. Staple had an infinity of gaiety, both in his look and behaviour : — Mr. Trueworth had no less of sweetness, and if his deportment seemed somewhat too serious for a man of his years, it was well atoned for by the excellence of his understanding. — Miss Flora however said, upon the whole, that both of them were charming men ; and Lady Mellasin added, that it was a great pity either of them should have bestowed his heart where there was so little likelihood of ever receiving any recompence. — “ Why so, my dear, cried Mr. Goodman, “ if my pretty charge is at present in a humour to make as many fools as she can “ in this world, I hope she is not determined to lead apes in another ; — I “ warrant she will change her mind one “ time or other. — I only wish she may “ not, as the old saying is, out-stand her “ market.”

While they were thus discoursing, a servant brought a letter from Mr. Staple, directed to Miss Betsy Thoughtless, which was immediately delivered to her : — on being told from whence it came, she gave it to Mr. Goodman, saying, “ I shall make “ no secret of the contents, — therefore, “ dear guardian, read it for the benefit of “ the company.”

Mr.

Mr. Goodman shook his head at the little sensibility she testified of his friend's devoirs, but said nothing, being willing to gratify the curiosity he doubted not but they were all in, Miss Betsey herself not excepted, as careless as she affected to be, which he did by reading in an audible voice these lines:

To the most amiable and most accomplished of her sex.

‘MADAM,

‘ IF the face be the index of the mind,
 ‘ (as I think one of our best poets takes
 ‘ upon him to assert) your soul must cer-
 ‘ tainly be all made up of harmony, and
 ‘ consequently take delight in what has so
 ‘ great a similitude of its own heavenly
 ‘ nature. — I flatter myself, therefore, you
 ‘ will not be offended that I presume to in-
 ‘ treat you will grace with your presence,
 ‘ a piece of music, composed by the so
 ‘ justly celebrated Signior Bononcini, and
 ‘ I hope will have justice done it in the
 ‘ performance, they being the best hands
 ‘ in town that are employ’d.

‘ I do myself the honour to inclose
 ‘ tickets for the ladies of Mr. Goodman’s
 ‘ family, and beg leave to wait on you
 ‘ this

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‘ this afternoon, in the pleasing expectation,
‘ tion, not only of being permitted to attend
‘ you to the concert, but also of an opportunity
‘ of renewing those humble and sincere professions
‘ I yesterday began to make, of a passion, which only
‘ charms such as yours could have the power of
‘ inspiring in any heart, and can be felt
‘ by none with greater warmth, zeal, tenderness,
‘ and respect, than by that of him who is, and ever must be,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your most passionate,

‘ And most faithful admirer,

T. STAPLE.

‘ P. S. If there are any other ladies of your
‘ acquaintance, to whom you think the entertainment
‘ may be agreeable, be pleased to make the invitation, —
‘ I shall bring tickets with me to accommodate
‘ whoever you choose to accompany you. — Once more I
‘ beseech you madam, to believe me, as above,

‘ Yours, &c.”

Mr.

are THE HISTORY OF

Mr. Goodman had scarce finished reading this letter, when Lady Mellasin and her daughter both cried out, at the same time, "O Miss Betsey,—how unlucky this happens: — what will you do with the captain now?"

"We will take him with us to the concert," replied she; — and in my opinion nothing could have fallen out more fortunately. — The captain has appointed to visit me at five, — Mr. Staple will doubtless be here about that time, if not before, in order to usher us to the entertainment, so that my father cannot expect any answer from me to his letter, and consequently I shall gain time."

Tho' Mr. Goodman was far from approving this way of proceeding, yet he could not forbear smiling with the rest, at Miss Betsey's contrivance, and told her, it was a pity she was not a man, she would have made a rare minister of state.

"Well, since it is so, said Lady Mellasin, I will have the honour of complimenting the captain with the ticket *Mr. Staple intended for me.*" Both *Ms Flora* and Miss Betsey press'd her ladyship

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ladyship to be of their company, and Mr. Goodman likewise endeavoured to persuade her to go; but she excused herself, saying, "A concert was never among the number of those entertainments she took pleasure in:" on which they left off speaking any farther on it: but Miss Betsy was not at a loss in her own mind to guess the true reason of her ladyship's refusal, and looked on it as a confirmation of the truth of what Nanny had told her concerning the diamond necklace.

There seemed, notwithstanding, one difficulty still remaining for Miss Betsy to get over; which was the probability of Mr. Truworth's making her a visit that afternoon; — she did not chuse to leave him to go to the concert nor yet to ask him to accompany them to it, because she thought it would be easy for a man of his penetration to discover that Mr. Staple was his rival; which she was by no means willing he should do before he had made a declaration to her of his own passion."

She was beginning to consider how she should manage in a point, which she looked upon as pretty delicate, when a letter from that gentleman eased her of all the apprehensions she at present had
on

on this score.—The manner in which he expressed himself was as follows :

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ MADAM,

‘ I REMEMBER (as what can be forgot in which you have the least concern) that the first time I had the honour of seeing you at Oxford, you seemed to take a great deal of pleasure in the pretty tricks of a squirrel, which a lady in the company had on her arm :—one of those animals (which they tell me has been lately caught) happening to fall in my way, I take the liberty of presenting him to you, intreating you will permit him to give you such diversion as is in his power. —Were the little denizen of the woods endued with any share of human reason, how happy would he think himself in the loss of his liberty, and how hug those chains which entitle him to so glorious a servitude.

‘ I had waited on you in person, in the hope of obtaining pardon for approaching you with so trifling an offering ; but am deprived of that satisfaction by the pressing commands of an old aunt, who insists on my passing this evening with her : — but what need is there to apologize

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‘ logize for the absence of a person so
‘ little known to you, and whose senti-
‘ ments are yet less so ? I rather ought to
‘ fear that the frequency of those visits I
‘ shall hereafter make, may be looked upon
‘ as taking too presuming an advantage of
‘ the permission you have been so good to
‘ give me. I will not, however, anticipate
‘ so great a misfortune, but endeavour to
‘ prevent it by proving, by all the ways I
‘ am able, that I am,

‘ With the most profound submission,

‘ Madam,

‘ Your very humble, obedient,

‘ And eternally devoted servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

Miss Betsy, after having read this letter, ordered the person who brought it should come into the parlour ; on which he delivered to her the present mentioned in the letter, which she received with a great deal of sweetness, gave the fellow something to drink her health, and sent her service to his master, with thanks, and an assurance that she should be glad to see him, whenever it suited with his convenience.

All the ladies then began to examine the squirrel, which was doubtless the most beautiful creature of its kind that could be purchased. The chain, which fastened it to its habitation, was gold, the links very thick, and curiously wrought. — Every one admired the elegance of the donor's taste.

Miss Betsey herself was charmed to an excess, both with the letter and the present; but as much as she was pleased with the respectful passion of Mr. Trueworth, she could not find in her heart to think of parting with the assiduities of Mr. Staple, nor even the blunt addresses of Captain Hysom, at least 'till she had exercised all the power her beauty gave her over them.

As the two last mentioned gentlemen were the friends of Mr. Goodman, he went out somewhat before the hour in which either of them was expected to come, choosing not to seem to know what it was not in his power to amend, and determined, as he had promised Miss Betsey, not to interfere between her and any of those who pretended to court her.

These

These two lovers came to the door at the same time, and Mr. Staple saying to the footman that opened the door, that he was come to wait on Miss Betsy,—‘ I
 “ want to speak with that young gentle-
 “ woman too, cried the Captain, if she
 “ be at leisure;—tell her my name is
 “ Hysom.”

Mr. Staple was immediately shewed up into the dining-room, and the Captain in the parlour, ’till Miss Betsy should be told his name: “ That spark, said he to him-
 “ self, I find is known here; I suppose he
 “ is one of those Mr. Goodman told me
 “ of, that has a mind to Miss Betsy; but
 “ as she knew I was to be here, I think
 “ she might have left some orders con-
 “ cerning me, and not make me wait ’till
 “ that young gew-gaw had spoke his mind
 “ to her.”

The fellow not coming down immediately, he grew very angry, and began to call and knock with his cane against the floor, which, it may be easily imagined, gave some sport to those above.—Miss Betsy, however, having told Mr. Staple the character of the man, and the diversion she intended to make of his pretensions, would not vex him too much, and

to atone for having made him attend so long, went to the top of the stairs herself, and desired him to walk up.

The reception she gave him was full of all the sweetness she could assume, and excused having made him wait, and laid the blame on the servant, who, she pretended, could not presently recollect his name: — this put him into an exceeding good humour, — “Nay, fair lady, said he, “as to that I have staid much longer “sometimes, before I could get to the “speech of some people, who I have not “half the respect for as I have for you; “—but you know, (continued he, giving “her a kiss, the smack of which might “be heard three rooms off) that I have “business with you, — business that requires dispatch, and that made me a “little impatient.”

All the company had much ado to refrain laughing out-right; but Miss Betsey kept her countenance to a miracle, “We “will talk of business another time, said “she; we are going to hear a fine entertainment of musick; — you must not “refuse giving us your company, — Lady “Mellasin has got a ticket on purpose “for you.” — “I am very much obliged “to her ladyship, replied the Captain,
“but

“ but I do now know whether Mr. Good-
 “ man may think well of it or not : for he
 “ would fain have put me off from visiting
 “ his charge here.—I soon found by his
 “ way of speaking the wind did not sit fair
 “ for me from that quarter, so tacked
 “ about, shifted my sails, and stood for
 “ the port directly.”

“ Manfully resolved, indeed ! said Mr.
 “ Staple ; but I hope, Captain, you have
 “ kept a good look-out, in order to avoid
 “ any ship of greater burthen, that might
 “ else chance to overset you.”—“ Oh, sir !
 “ as to that, replied the Captain, you
 “ might have spared yourself the trouble of
 “ giving me this caution, there are only
 “ two small pinks in my way, and they
 “ had best stand clear, or I shall run foul
 “ on them.”

Though Mr. Staple had been apprised
 before-hand of the Captain's pretences, and
 that Miss Betsy intended to encourage them
 only by way of amusement to herself
 and friends, yet the rough manner in which
 his rival had uttered these words, brought
 the blood into his cheeks, which lady
 Mellasin perceiving, and fearing that what
 was began in jest might in the end become
 more serious than could be wished, turned
 the conversation, and addressing herself to

the Captain, on the score of what he had said concerning Mr. Goodman, made many apologies for her husband's behaviour in this point :—assured him, that he had not a more sincere friend in the world, nor one, who would be more ready to serve him, in whatever was in his power.

The Captain had a fund of great good-nature in his heart, but was somewhat too much addicted to passion, and frequently apt to resent without a cause, but when once convinced he had been in the wrong, no one could be more ready to acknowledge and ask pardon for his mistake.—He had been bred at sea ;—his conversation, for almost his whole life had been chiefly among those of his own occupation ;—he was altogether unacquainted with the manners and behaviour of the polite world, and equally a stranger to what is called genteel raillery, as he was to courtly complaisance ; it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that he was often rude, without designing to be so, and took many things as affronts, which were not meant as such.

Lady Mellasin, who never wanted words, and knew how to express herself in the most persuasive terms whenever she pleased to make use of them, had the address to
con-

convince the Captain, that Mr. Goodman was no enemy to his suit, though he would not appear to encourage it.

While the Captain was engaged with her Ladyship in this discourse, Miss Betsy took the opportunity of telling Mr. Staple that she insisted upon it, that he should be very civil to a rival from whose pretensions he might be certain he had nothing to apprehend, and moreover that when she gave him her hand to lead her into the concert-room, he should give his to Miss Flora, without discovering the least marks of discontent:—the lover looked on this last injunction as too severe a trial of his patience: but she would needs have it so, and he was under a necessity of obeying, or of suffering much greater mortification from her displeasure.

Soon after this they all four went to the entertainment in Mr. Goodman's coach, which Lady Mellasin had ordered to be got ready.—The Captain was mightily pleased with the music, and had judgment enough in it to know it was better than the band he had on board his ship:—"When they have done playing, said he, I will ask them what they will have to go with me the next voyage;" but Mr. Staple told him, it would be an affront, that they

L 2

were

were men who got more by their instruments than the best officer either by sea or land did by his commission. — This mistake, as well as many others the Captain fell into, made not only the company he was with, but those who sat near enough to hear him, a good deal of diversion.

Nothing of moment happening either here or at Mr. Goodman's, where they all supped together, it would be needless to repeat any particulars of the conversation; what has been said already of their different sentiments, and behaviour, may be a sufficient sample of the whole.

CHAP.



C H A P. XVIII.

Treats on no fresh matters, but serves to heighten those already mentioned.

MR. Goodman had staid abroad 'till very late that night the concert had been performed, so was not a witness of any thing that had passed after the company came home; but on Lady Mellafin's repeating to him every thing she remembered, was very well pleased to hear that she had reconciled the Captain to him, tho' extremely sorry, that the blunt ill judged affection of that gentleman had exposed him to the ridicule, not only of Miss Betsy, but also of all her followers.

That young lady, in the mean time, was far from having any commiseration for the anxieties of those who loved her; —on the contrary, she triumphed in the pains she gave, if it can be supposed that she, who was altogether ignorant of them in herself, could look upon them as sincere in others: —but I am apt to believe ladies of this cast, regard all the professions of love made to them (as indeed many of them are) only as words of course.

—the prerogative of youth and beauty in the one sex, and a duty incumbent on the other to pay;—they value themselves on the number and quality of their lovers, as they do upon the number and richness of their cloaths, because it makes them of consideration in the world, and never take the trouble of reflecting how dear it may sometimes cost those to whom they are indebted for indulging this vanity.

That this, at least, was the motive which induced Miss Betsy to treat her lovers in the manner she did, is evident to a demonstration, from every other action of her life:—she had a certain softness in her disposition, which rendered her incapable of knowing the distress of any one, without affording all the relief that was in her power to give, and had she sooner been convinced of the reality of the woes of love, she sooner had left off the ambition of inflicting them, and perhaps have been brought to regard those who laboured under them, rather with too much than too little compassion;—but of this the reader will be able to judge on proceeding farther in this history.

There were now three gentlemen who all of them addressed this young lady on *the most honourable terms*, yet did her
giddy

giddy mind make no distinction between the serious passion they had for her, and the idle gallantries she received from those who either had no design in making them, or such as tended to her undoing.

Impatient to hear in what manner Mr. Truworth would declare himself, and imagining he would come the next day, as he had made so handsome an apology for not having waited on her the preceding one, she told Mr. Staple and Capt. Hyson, in order to prevent their coming, that she was engaged to pass that whole afternoon, and evening, with some ladies of her acquaintance : neither the Captain nor Mr. Staple suspected the truth of what she said, but the former was in too much haste to know some issue of his fate to be quite contented with this delay.

Miss Betsy was not deceived in her expectations ; — soon after dinner was over, she was told Mr. Truworth had sent to know if she was at home, and begg'd leave to wait upon her — Lady Mellasin having a great deal of company that day in the dining-room, she went into an adjacent one to receive him : — he was charmed at finding her alone, a happiness he could not flatter himself with, on entering the house, he was assured by the number

of footmen that he saw in the hall, that many visitors were there before him :— this unexpected piece of good fortune, as he then thought it, especially as he found her playing with the squirrel he had sent to her the day before, so much elated him, that it brightened his whole aspect, and gave a double share of vivacity to his eyes, “ May I hope your pardon, Madam, said he, for presuming to approach you with “ so trifling a present as that little creature ? ” — Oh, Mr. Trueworth ? answered she, I will not forgive you if you speak “ slight of my squirrel though I am indebted to you for the pleasure he gives “ me. — I love him excessively ! — you “ could not have made me a more oblig- “ ing present.”

“ How, Madam ! cried he ; I should be “ miserable indeed, if I had nothing in “ my power to offer more worthy your “ acceptance than that animal. — What “ think you Madam, of an adoring and “ passionately devoted heart ?

“ A heart ! rejoined she, oh dear, & “ heart may be a pretty thing for ought I “ know to the contrary ; but there is such “ an enclosure of flesh and bone about it, “ that it is utterly impossible for one to “ see

“ see into it, and consequently to know
 “ whether one likes it or not.”

“ The heart, Madam, in the sense I
 “ mean, said he, implies the soul, which
 “ being a spirit and invisible, can only be
 “ known by its effects : — if the whole
 “ services of mine may render it an obla-
 “ tion, such as may obtain a gracious re-
 “ ception from the amiable Miss Thought-
 “ less, I shall bless the hour in which I
 “ first beheld her charms, as the most
 “ fortunate one I ever had to boast of.”
 In ending these words he kissed her hand,
 with a look full of the greatest respect and
 tenderness.

She then told him, the services of the
 soul must needs be valuable, because they
 were sincere ; but as she knew not of what
 nature those services were he intended to
 render her, he must excuse her for not so
 readily accepting them : — on which, it
 is not to be doubted, but that he assured
 her, they should be only such as were dic-
 tated by the most pure affections, and ac-
 companied by the strictest honour.

He was going on with such protesta-
 tions as may be imagined a man so much
 enamoured would make to the object of
 his wishes, when he was interrupted by

Miss Flora, who came hastily into the room, and told him, that her mamma hearing that he was in the house, expected he would not leave it without letting her have the pleasure of seeing him ; — that they were just going to tea, and that her ladyship intreated he would join company with those friends she had already with her.

Mr. Truworth would have been glad to have found some plausible pretence for not complying with this invitation, but as he could not make any that would not be looked on as favouring of ill manners, and Miss Betsy insisted on his going, they all went together into the dining-room.

The lover had now no farther opportunity of prosecuting his suit in this visit ; but he made another the next day, more early than before, and found no-body but Mr. Goodman with Miss Betsy, Lady Melanin and Miss Flora being gone among the shops, either to buy something they wanted, or to tumble over goods, as they frequently did, merely for the sake of seeing new fashions. — Mr. Truworth having never been seen by Mr. Goodman, Miss Betsy presented him to him with these words, “ Sir, this is a gentleman from Oxford, — an intimate friend of brother Frank’s,

“ Frank’s, and who did me the favour
 “ to bring me a letter from him.” There
 needed no more to make Mr. Goodman
 know, both who he was, and the business
 on which he came : he received him with
 a great deal of good manners ; but know-
 ing his absence would be most agreeable,
 after some few compliments, pretended he
 was called abroad by urgent business, and
 took his leave.

How much it rejoiced the sincerely de-
 voted heart of Mr. Truworth, to find
 himself once more alone with the idol of
 his wishes, may easily be conceived by
 those who have had any experience of the
 passion he so deeply felt ; — but his feli-
 city was of short continuance, and he
 profited but little by the complaisance of
 Mr. Goodman.

He was but just beginning to pour forth
 some part of those tender sentiments, with
 which his soul overflowed, when he was
 prevented from proceeding, by a second
 interruption, much more disagreeable than
 the former had been.

Mr. Staple, and Captain Hyson, for
 whom Miss Betsy had not left the same
 orders she had done the day before, came
 both to visit her ; the former had the ad-
 vantage

vantage of being there somewhat sooner than the other, and accosted her with an air, which made the enamoured heart of Mr. Truworth immediately beat an alarm to jealousy. Mr. Staple, who had seen him there once before, when he brought her brother's letter to her, did not presently know him for his rival, nor imagined he had any other intent in his visits, than to pay his compliments to the sister of his friend.

They were all three engaged in a conversation, which had nothing particular in it, when Miss Betsey was told Captain Hyson desired to speak with her: on which she bid the fellow desire him to walk in. "He is in the back parlour, Madam," replied he; — "I told him you had company, so he desires you will come to him there; for he says he has great business with you, and must needs speak with you." Both Miss Betsey and Mr. Staple laugh'd immoderately at this message; but Mr. Truworth, who was not in the secret, look'd a little grave, as not knowing what to think of it. "You would scarce believe, Sir," said Mr. Staple to him, "that this embassy came from the court of cupid, yet I assure you the Captain is one of this lady's most passionate admirers." "Yes, indeed,"

“ deed, added Miss Betsy, and threatens
 “ terrible things to every one who should
 “ dare to dispute the conquest of my heart
 “ with him : — but go, continued she,
 to the footman, “ tell him, I have
 “ friends with me whom I cannot be so
 “ rude to leave, and that I insist on his
 “ giving us his company in this room.”

The Captain on this was prevailed upon to come in, though not very well pleased at finding himself obliged to do so, by the positive commands of his mistress.—He paid his respects, however, in his blunt manner to the gentlemen, as well as Miss Betsy, and having drawn his chair as near her as he could, “ I hoped, Madam, said he, you would have found an opportunity of speaking to me before now :—you must needs think I am a little uneasy till I know what I have to depend upon.”—“ Bless me, Sir, cried she, you talk in an odd manner ! — and then,” continued she, pointing to Mr. Truworth, “ this gentleman here, who is a friend of my brother’s, will think I have outrun my income, and that you come to dun me for money borrow’d of you.” “ No, no, answer’d he, as to that you owe me nothing but good-will, — and that I think I deserve for the respect I have for you, if it were for nothing else. —

“but, Madam, I should be glad to know
 “some answer to the business I wrote to
 “you upon.”—“Lord, Sir, replied she,
 “I have not yet had time to think upon
 “it, much less to resolve on any thing.”
 “That is strange, resumed he; why you
 “have had three days, and sure that is
 “long enough to think and resolve too,
 “on any thing.”—“Not for me indeed,
 “Captain, answered she, laughing;—but
 “come, here are just four of us,—what
 “think you, gentlemen, of a game of
 “quadrille to kill time?”

Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple told her
 at once, and they approved the motion,
 and she was just going to call for cards
 and fishes, when the Captain stopped her,
 saying, I never loved play in my life,
 “and have no time to kill, as mayhap
 “these gentlemen have, who, ’tis likely
 “have nothing else to do than to dress
 “and visit;—I have a great deal of
 “business upon my hands;—the ship is
 “taking in her lading, and I do not know
 “but we may sail in six or seven days,
 “so must desire you would fix a day for
 “us to be alone together, that I may
 “know at once what it is you design to
 “do.”—“Fye, Captain! replied she,
 “how can you think of such a thing?—
 “—I assure you, sir,” added she, with

an affected disdain, "I never make appointments with gentlemen."

"That I believe, said he, but you should consider that I live a great way off; — 'tis a long walk from Mile-end to St. James's, and I hate your jolting hackney coaches :—besides I may come and come again, and never be able to get a word with you in private in an afternoon, and all the morning I am engaged either at the India-House, or at 'Change ; — therefore I should think it is better for both of us not to stand shilly, shally ; but come to the point at once ; for lookye, fair lady, if we happen to agree, there will be little enough time to settle every thing, as I am obliged to go so soon."—"Too little in my opinion, Sir, answered she, therefore I think it best to defer talking any more of the matter, 'till you come back."

"Come back, cried he, why do you consider I shall be gone three years"—
 "Really, Sir, said she, as I told you before, I have never considered any thing about it, nor can promise I shall be able to say any more to you at the end of twice the time you mention, than I
 "can

“ can do at present, which I assure you is
 “ just nothing at all.”

Though both Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple had too much good manners to do any thing that might affront the Captain, yet neither of them could restrain their laughter so well as to prevent some marks of the inclination they had for it, from being visible in their faces ; — and willing to contribute something on their parts to the diversion they perceived she gave herself, with a lover so every way unsuitable to her, — one told her, it was a great pity she did not consult the Captain’s convenience ; — the other said that it must needs be a vast fatigue for a gentleman, who was accustomed only to walk the quarter-deck, to take a stretch of four miles at once ; — “ And all to no purpose,” cried he that had spoken first, “ pray, Madam, give him his dispatch.”

As little acquainted as the Captain was with raillery, he had understanding enough to make him see, that Miss Betsey’s behaviour to him had rendered him the jest of all the company that visited her, and this he took so ill, that all the liking he before had to her was now turned into contempt. — Finding they were going on in the *ironical* way they had began, — “ Lookye
 “ gentle-

“ gentlemen, (said he, with a pretty stern countenance) “ I would advise you to
 “ meddle only with such things as concern yourselves ;—you have nothing to
 “ do with me, nor I with you.—If your
 “ errand here be as I suspect it is, there
 “ sits one who I dare answer will find you
 “ employment enough, as long as you
 “ shall think it worth your while to dance
 “ attendance. As for you, madam,” continued he, turning to Miss Betsy, “ I
 “ think it would have become you as well,
 “ to have given me a more civil answer ;
 “ — if you did not approve of my proposals, you might have told me so at
 “ first ; — but I shall trouble neither you
 “ nor myself any farther about the matter.
 “ —I see how it is well enough, and when
 “ next I steer for the coast of matrimony,
 “ shall take care to look out for a port
 “ not cumbered with rubbish : — so your
 “ servant.”

As he was going out of the house, he met Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora just entering, being returned from the ramble above-mentioned :—they saw he was very angry, and would fain have persuaded him to turn back, telling him, that if any misunderstanding had happened between him and Miss Betsy, they would endeavour to make it up and reconcile them. — To
 which

which he replied, that he thanked them for their love, but he had done with Miss Betsey for good and all ;— that she was no more than a young flirt, and did not know how to use a gentleman handsomely ; — said, he should be glad to take a bowl of punch with Mr. Goodman before he went on his voyage ; but would not come any more to his house to be scoffed at by Miss Betsey, and those that came after her.

Miss Flora told him, that it was unjust in him to deprive her mamma and herself, of the pleasure of his good company for the fault of Miss Betsey, who, she said, she could not help owning was of a very giddy temper. — Lady Mellasin, to what her daughter had said, added many obliging things, in order to prevail on him, either to return, or renew his visits hereafter ; but the Captain was obstinate, and persisting in his resolution of coming there no more, took his leave, and Miss Flora lost all hope of receiving any benefit from his being rejected by Miss Betsey.



C H A P. XIX.

Will make the reader little the wiser.

THE greatest part of the time that Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple staid with Miss Betsy, was taken up with talking of Captain Hysom ; — his passion, — his behaviour, and the manner in which he received his dismissal, afforded indeed an ample field for conversation : — Lady Mellasin, and Miss Flora, relating the answers he had given them, on their pressing him to come back, Mr. Truworth said, that it must be owned, that he had shewn a strength of resolution, which few men in love could boast of.

“ Love, sir, according to my notions
 “ of that passion,” replied Mr. Staple,
 “ is not to be felt by every heart ; —
 “ many deceive themselves in this point,
 “ and take for it what is in reality no
 “ more than a bare liking of a beautiful
 “ object : — the Captain seems to me to
 “ have a soul, as well as form, cast in
 “ too rough a mould, to be capable of
 “ those refined and delicate ideas, which
 “ alone

“ alone constitute and are worthy to be
 “ called love.”

“ Yet, said Lady Mellasm, I have
 “ heard Mr. Goodman give him an excel-
 “ lent character, and above all, that he is
 “ one of the best-natured men breathing.”
 “ That may be indeed, madam, resumed
 “ Mr. Staple, and some allowances ought
 “ to be made for the manner in which
 “ he has been bred ; though, added he,
 “ I have known many commanders, not
 “ only of Indiamen, but of other trading
 “ vessels, who have all their life-time
 “ used the seas, yet have known how to
 “ behave with politeness enough when on
 “ shore.”

Mr. Truworth agreed with Mr. Staple,
 that though the amorous declaration of a
 person of the Captain's age, and fashion of
 bringing up, to one of Miss Betsy's, ex-
 posed him to the deserved ridicule of as
 many as knew it ; yet ought not his parti-
 cular foible to be any reflection on his occu-
 pation, which merited to be held in the
 greatest veneration, as the strength and
 opulence of the nation was owing to its
 commerce in foreign parts.

This was highly obliging to Mr. Staple,
 whose father had been a merchant, and
 Mr.

Mr. Truworth being the first who took his leave, perceiving the other staid supper, he said abundance of handsome things in his praise; and seemed to have conceived so high an esteem of him, that Miss Betsy was diverted in her mind to think how he would change his way of speaking, when once the secret of his rivalry should come out, as she knew it could not fail to do in a short time.

But as easy Mr. Staple was at present, on this occasion, Mr. Truworth was no less anxious and perplexed :—he was convinced that the other visited Miss Betsy on no other score than that of love, and it appeared to him equally certain by the freedom with which he saw him treated in the family, that he was likewise greatly encouraged, if not by Miss Betsy herself, at least by her guardian.

His thoughts were now wholly taken up with the means, by which he might gain the advantage over a rival, whom he looked upon as a formidable one, not only for his personal accomplishments, but also for his having the good fortune to address her before himself. — All he could do was to prevent, as much as possible, all opportunities of his entertaining Miss Betsy in private, 'till the arrival of Mr. Francis
Thoughtless.

Thoughtless, from whose friendship, and the influence he had over his sister, he hoped much.

He waited on her the next day very early :—Mr. Goodman happening to dine that day later than ordinary, on account of some friends he had with him, and the cloth not being drawn, Miss Betsy went and received him in another room. — Having this favourable opportunity, he immediately began to prepare for putting into execution one of those stratagems he had contrived for separating her from Mr. Staple. After some few tender speeches, he fell into a discourse concerning the weather ; said, he was sorry to perceive the days so much shortened,—that summer would soon be gone ; and added, that as that beautiful season could last but a small time, the most should be made of it. — “ I came, said he, to intreat the favour of “ you, and Miss Flora, to permit me to “ accompany you in an airing through “ Brumpton, Kensington, Chelsea, and “ the other little villages on this side of “ London.”

Miss Betsy replied, that she would go with all her heart, and believed she could answer the same for Miss Flora, there being only two grave dens, and their
wives,

wives, within, whom she would be glad to be disengaged from ; — “ but if not, said she, I can send for a young lady in the neighbourhood, who will be glad to give us her company.”

She sent first, however, to Miss Flora, who immediately came in, and the proposal being made, accepted it with pleasure, and added, that she would ask her mamma for orders for the coach to be got ready. — “ It need not, madam, said Mr. Truworth, my servant is here, and he shall get one from Blunt’s ; — but Miss Flora insisted on their going in Mr. Goodman’s, saying, she was certain neither he nor her mamma would go out that day, as the company they had were come to stay ; on which Mr. Truworth complied.

When she had left the room, “ Ah ! madam, said he to Miss Betsy, could I flatter myself with believing I owed this condescension to any other motive than your complaisance, to a person who has some share in your brother’s friendship, I should be blest indeed ; — but ah ! I see I have a rival, — a rival dangerous to my hopes, not only on the account of his merits, but also as he had the honour of declaring his pas-
“ sion

“ sion before me : — the fortunate Mr.
 “ Staple, added he, kissing her hand,
 “ may perhaps have already made some
 “ impresson on that heart I would sacri-
 “ fice my all to gain, and I am come too
 “ late.”

“ Rather too soon, replied she, smil-
 “ ing ; — both of you equally too soon,
 “ admitting his sentiments for me to be as
 “ you imagine ; for I assure you, sir,
 “ my heart has hitherto been entirely my
 “ own, and is not very likely to incline
 “ to the reception of any guest of the na-
 “ ture you mean, for yet a long — long
 “ time. — Whoever thinks to gain me
 “ must not be in a hurry, like Captain
 “ Hyfom.”

Mr. Truworth was about to make some passionate reply, when Miss Flora returned, and told them the coach would be ready immediately, for she herself had spoke to the coachman, and bid him put the horses to with all the haste he could ; on which the lover expressed his sense of the obligation he had to her for taking this trouble, in the politest terms.

A person of much less discernment than this gentleman might easily perceive, that the way to be agreeable to Miss Betsy, was
 not

not to be too serious;—he therefore assumed all the vivacity he was master of, both before they went, and during the whole course of the little tour they made, in which it is not to be doubted but he regaled them with every thing the places they passed through could furnish.

The ladies were so well pleased, both with their entertainment and the company of the person who entertained them, that they seemed not in haste to go home, and he had the double satisfaction of enjoying the presence of his mistress, and of giving at least one day's disappointment to his rival:—he was confirmed in the truth of this conjecture, when, on returning to Mr. Goodman's, which was not 'till some hours after close of day, the footman who opened the door told Miss Betsy, that Mr. Staple had been to wait upon her.

After this it may be supposed he had a night of much more tranquility, than the preceding one had afforded him.—The next morning, as early as he thought decency permitted, he made a visit to Miss Betsy, under the pretence of coming to enquire if her health had not suffered by being abroad in the night air, and how she had rested. — She received him with

a great deal of sprightliness, and replied, she found herself so well after it, as to be ready for such another jaunt, whenever he had a fancy for it. "I take you at your word, madam," (cried he, transported to hear she anticipated what he came on purpose to entreat, — "I am ready this moment, if you please, continued he, and we will either take a barge, and go up the river, or a coach to Hampstead, or any of those places, just to diversify the scene;—you have only to say which you chuse."

She then told him there was a necessity of deferring their ramble 'till the afternoon, because Miss Flora was abroad, and would not return 'till dinner-time.—"As to what rout we shall take, and every thing belonging to it, said she, I leave it entirely to you;—I know nobody has a more elegant taste, or a better judgment."—"I have taken care, replied he, to give the world a high opinion of me in both, by making my addresses to the amiable Miss Betsy;—but, madam, pursued he, since we are alone, will you give me leave to tell you how I have employed my hours this morning."—"Why, — in dressing, — breakfasting, — and, perhaps a little reading, answered she."—"A

"small

“ small time, madam, suffices for the two
“ former articles with me, resumed he,
“ but I have indeed been reading :—hap-
“ pening to dip into the works of a poet,
“ who wrote near a century ago, I found
“ some words so adapted to the situation
“ of my heart, and so agreeable to the
“ sense of the answer I was about to make
“ yesterday to what you said, concerning
“ the perseverance of a lover, that I could
“ not forbear putting some notes to them,
“ which I beg you will give me your
“ opinion of.”

In speaking these words, he took a piece of paper out of his pocket, and sung the following stanzas.

I.

“ THE Patriarch, to gain a wife
“ Chaste, beautiful, and young,
“ Serv'd fourteen years, a painful life,
“ And never thought it long.

II.

“ Oh! were you to reward such cares,
“ And life so long would stay,
“ Not fourteen, but four hundred years,
“ Would seem but as one day.”

Mr. Truworth had a fine voice, and great skill in music, having perfected himself in that science from the best masters when he was in Italy. Miss Betsy was so charmed both with the words and the notes, that she made him sing them several times over, and afterwards set them down in her music-book, to the end that she might get them by heart, and join her voice in concert with her spinnet.

Mr. Truworth would not make his morning visit too long, believing it might be her time to dress against dinner, as she was now in such a dishabille as ladies usually put on, on their first rising; — so after having received a second promise from her of giving him her company that day abroad, took his leave, highly satisfied with the progress he imagined he had made in her good graces.

The wind happening to grow a little boisterous, though the weather otherwise was fair and clear, made Mr. Truworth think a land journey would be more agreeable to the ladies, than to venture themselves upon the water; he therefore procured a handsome livery coach, and attended by his two servants, went to Mr. Goodman's; — the ladies were already in

expectation of him, and did not make him wait a moment.

Nothing extraordinary happening at this entertainment, nor at those others, which, for several succeeding days, without intermission, Mr. Truworth prevailed on his mistress to accept, it would be superfluous to trouble the reader with the particulars of them.

Mr. Staple all this time was very uneasy : — he had not seen Miss Betsy for a whole week, and though he knew not as yet, that he was deprived of that satisfaction, by her being engrossed by a rival, yet he now began to be sensible she had less regard for him, than he had flattered himself he had inspired her with, and this of itself was a sufficient mortification to a young gentleman, who was not only passionately in love, but also could not, without being guilty of great injustice to his own merits, but think himself not altogether unworthy of succeeding. — This, however, was no more than a slight sample of the inquietudes which the blind God sometimes inflicts on hearts devoted to him, as will hereafter appear in the progress of this history.



CHAP. XX.

Contains an odd accident, which happened to Miss Betsy in the cloysters of Westminster-Abbey.

MR. Trueworth, who was yet far from being acquainted with the temper of the object he adored, now thought he had no reason to despair of being one day in possession of all he aimed to obtain; it seemed certain to him, at least, that he had nothing to apprehend from the pretensions of a rival, who at first he had looked upon as so formidable, and no other at present interpolated between him and his designs.

Miss Betsy, in the mean while, wholly regardless of who hoped, or who despaired, had no aim in any thing she did, but merely to divert herself, and to that end laid hold of every opportunity that offered. Mr. Goodman having casually mentioned, as they were at supper, that one Mr. Soulguard had just taken orders, and was to preach his first sermon at Westminster-abbey the next day, she presently had a curiosity of hearing how he would behave

behave in the pulpit: — his over-modest, and, as they termed it, sheepish behaviour in company, having, as often as he came there, afforded matter of ridicule to her and Miss Flora. — These two young ladies therefore talking on it after they were in bed, agreed to go to the cathedral, not doubting but they should have enough to laugh at, and repeat to all those of their acquaintance who had ever seen him.

What meer trifles, — what airy nothings serve to amuse a mind not taken up with more essential matters! — Miss Betsy was so full of the diversion she should have in hearing the down-looked bashful Mr. Soulguard harrangue his congregation, that she could think and talk of nothing else, 'till the hour arrived when she should go to experience what she had so pleasant an idea of.

Miss Flora, who had 'till now seemed as eager as herself, cried all at once, that her head ached, and that she did not care for stirring out. — Miss Betsy, who would fain have laughed her out of it, told her, she had only got the vapours, — that the parson would cure her, — and such like things, — but the other was not to be prevailed upon by all Miss Betsy, or even Lady Mellasin herself, could say, and an
ever

swered with some fullness, that positively she would not go.—Miss Betsey was highly ruffled at this sudden turn of her temper, as it was now too late to send for any other young lady of her acquaintance to go with her;—resolving, nevertheless, not to balk her humour, she ordered a chair to be called, and went alone.

Neither the young parson's manner of preaching, nor the text he chose, being any way material to this history, I shall therefore pass over the time of divine service, and only say, that after it was ended Miss Betsey passing towards the west gate, and stopping to look on the fine tomb, erected to the memory of Mr. Secretary Craggs, was accosted by Mr. Bloomacre, a young gentleman who sometimes visited Lady Mellasin, and lived at Westminster, in which place he had a large estate.

He had with him, when he came up to her, two gentlemen of his acquaintance, but who were entire strangers to Miss Betsey, — “What, said he, the celebrated
 “Miss Betsey Thoughtless! — Miss Betsey
 “Thoughtless! the idol of mankind!
 “alone, unattended by any of her train
 “of admirers, and contemplating these
 “memento's of mortality!” — “To
 “compliment my understanding, replied she,

“ she, gaily, you should rather have told
 “ me I was contemplating the memento’s
 “ of great actions.” — “ You are at the
 “ wrong end of the cathedral for that,
 “ madam, resumed he; and I don’t re-
 “ member to have heard any thing extra-
 “ ordinary of the life of this great man,
 “ whose effigy makes so fine a figure here,
 “ except the favours he received from the
 “ ladies.”

“ ’Twere too much then to bestow
 “ them on him both alive and dead, cried
 “ she, therefore we will pass on to some
 “ other.”

Mr. Bloomacre had a great deal of wit and vivacity, nor were his two companions deficient in either of these qualities; so that between the three, Miss Betsy was very agreeably entertained. — They went round from tomb to tomb, and the real characters, as well as epitaphs, some of which are flattering enough, afforded a variety of observations. — In fine, the conversation was so pleasing to Miss Betsy, that she never thought of going home, ’till it grew too dark to examine either the sculpture, or the inscriptions; so insensibly does time glide on, when accompanied with satisfaction.

But now ensued a mortification, which struck a damp on the sprightliness of this young lady : — she had sent away the chair which brought her, not doubting but that there would be others about the church doors. She knew not how difficult it was to procure such a vehicle in Westminster, especially on a Sunday. — To add to her vexation, it rained very much, and she was not in a habit fit to travel on foot in any weather, much less in such as this.

They went down into the cloysters, in order to find some person whom they might send, either for a coach or chair, for the gentlemen would have been glad of such conveniences for themselves, as well as Miss Betsey : — they walked round and round several times, without hearing or seeing any body ; — but, at last, a fellow, who used to be employed in sweeping the church doors, offered his service to procure them what they wanted, in case there was a possibility of doing it : — they promised to gratify him well for his pains, and he ran with all the speed he could to do as he had said.

The rain and wind increased to such a prodigious height, that scarce was ever a
more

more tempestuous evening. Almost a whole hour was elapsed, and the man not come back, so that they had reason to fear neither coach nor chair was to be got. — Miss Betsy began to grow extremely impatient; — the gentlemen endeavour'd all they could to keep her in good humour, — “We have a good stone roof over our heads, madam, said one of them, and that at present shelters us from the inclemency of the elements.” — “Beside,” cried another, the storm cannot last all ways, — and when it is a little abated, — here are three of us, — we will take you in our arms by turns, and carry you home.” — All this would not make Miss Betsy laugh, and she was in the utmost agitation of mind to think what she should do, when, on a sudden, a door in that part of the cloister, which leads to Little Dean’s Yard was opened, and a very young lady, not exceeding eleven years of age, but very richly habited, came running out, and taking Miss Betsy by the sleeve, “Madam, said she, I beg to speak with you.” — Miss Betsy was surpris’d, but stepping some paces from the gentlemen to hear what she had to say, the other drawing towards the door, cried, “Please, madam, to come in here;” on which she followed, and the gentlemen stood about some four or five yards distant.

tant.—Miss Betsey had no sooner reached the threshold, which had a step down into the hall, and pulling her gently down, as if to communicate what she had to say with the more privacy, than a footman, who stood behind the door, immediately clapp'd it to, and put the chain across, as if he apprehended some violence might be offered to it. — Miss Betsey was in so much consternation that she was unable to speak one word, 'till the young lady, who still had hold of her hand, said to her, “ You may “ thank Heaven, madam, that our family “ happen'd to be in town, — else I do “ not know what mischief might have “ befallen you.” — “ Bless me,” cried Miss Betsey, and was going on, but the other interrupted her, saying, hastily, as she led her forward, — “ Walk this way, — my “ brother will tell you all.” — Miss Betsey then stopped short, “ What means all this? “ said she: where am I pray, miss? who “ is your brother?” To which the other replied, that her brother was the Lord Viscount ———, and that he at present was the owner of that house.

The surprise Miss Betsey had been put in by this young lady's first accosting her, was not at all dissipated by these words, but had now an equal portion of curiosity added.

added to it; — she longed to know the meaning of words, which at present seem'd so mysterious to her, and with what kind of mischief she had been threatened, that she readily accompanied her young conductress into a magnificent parlour, at the upper end of which sat the nobleman she had been told of, — “ I am extremely
 “ happy (said he as soon as he saw her
 “ enter) that Providence has put it in my
 “ power to rescue so fine a lady from the
 “ villainy contrived against her.

Miss Betsy replied, that she should always be thankful for any favour conferred upon her, but desired to know of what nature they were, for which she was indebted to his lordship :—he then told her, that the persons she had been with had the most base designs upon her ;—that he had heard from a closet window where he was sitting, two of them lay the plot for carrying her off in a hackney-coach; and added, that being struck with horror at the foul intention, he had contrived, by the means of his sister, to get her out of their power ; —“ For, said he, I know one of them to
 “ be so bloody a villain, that had I gone
 “ out myself, I must have fallen a sacrifice to their resentment.

Miss Betsy was quite confounded; she knew not how to question the veracity of a nobleman, who could have no view or interest to deceive her, yet it was equally incongruous to her, that Mr. Bloomacre could harbour any designs upon her of that sort his lordship mentioned; — she had several times been in company with that gentleman, and he had never behaved towards her in a manner which could give her room to suspect he had any dishonourable intentions towards her: — but then, the treatment she had received from the gentleman-commoner at Oxford reminded her, that men of an amorous complexion want only an opportunity to shew those inclinations, which indolence, or perhaps indelicacy, prevents them from attempting to gratify by assiduities and courtship.

After having taken some little time to consider what she should say, she replied, that she was infinitely obliged to his lordship for the care he took of her, but might be very well amazed to hear those gentlemen had any ill designs upon her, two of whom were perfect strangers to her, and the other often visited at the house where she was boarded. As for the sending for a coach, she said it was by her own desire, a chair could be procured: and added, that

that if his lordship had no other reason to apprehend any ill was meant to her, she could not, without injustice, forbear to clear up the mistake.

Lord ——— was a little confounded at these words, but soon recovering himself, told her that she knew not the real character of the persons she had been with ; — that Bloomacre was one of the greatest libertines in the world ; — that though she might agree to have a coach sent for, she could not be sure to what place it might carry her ; and that he heard two of them, while the third was entertaining her, speak to each other in a manner which convinced him the most villainous contrivance was about to be practised on her.

A loud knocking at the door now interrupted their discourse ; — both his lordship and his sister seemed terribly alarm'd, — all the servants were called, and charge given not to open the door upon any account, — to bar up the lower windows, and to give answers from those above, to whoever was there. — The knocking continued with greater violence than it began, and Miss Betsy heard the gentlemen's voices talking to the servants, and though she could not distinguish what they said, found there were very high words between
them

them. — My lord's sister ran into the hall to listen, then came back, crying, "O what terrible oaths! — I am afraid they will break open the door." — "No," replied lord ———, it is too strong for that; — but I wish we had been so wise as to send for a constable." One of the servants came down and repeated what their young lady had said; adding, that the gentlemen swore they would not leave the place 'till they had spoke with the lady, who they said had been trepann'd into that house; — on this, "Suppose," my lord, said Miss Betsy, I go to the door, and tell them that I will not go with them." — "No, madam, answered Lord ———, I cannot consent my door should be opened to such ruffians; for, besides that they would certainly seize, and carry you off by force, I know not what mischief they might do my poor men, for having at first refused them entrance." — She then said she would go up to the window, and answer them from thence; but he would not suffer her to be seen by them at all, and to keep her from insisting on it, told her a great many stories of rapes, and other mischiefs, that had been perpetrated by Bloomacre, and those he kept company with.

All this did not give Miss Betsy those terrors, which, it is very plain his lordship and sister endeavoured to inspire her with, yet would she say no more of appearing to the gentlemen, as she found he was so averse to it.

At length the knocking ceased, and one of the footmen came down, and said, that those who had given his lordship this disturbance had withdrawn from the door, and he believed were gone quite out of the Cloisters ; — but this intelligence did not satisfy Lord — — ; he either was, or pretended to be, in fear, that they were still skulking in some corner, and would rush in if once they saw the door opened. — There was still the same difficulty as ever, how Miss Betsy should get home ; — that is, how she should get safely out of the house, for the rain being over, the servants said they did not doubt but they should be able to procure a chair or coach : — after much debating on this matter, it was thus contrived.

Lord — — had a window that looked into the yard of one of the prebendaries, — a footman was to go out of the window to the back door of that reverend divine, relate the whole story, and beg leave to

go through his house : — this request being granted, the footman went, and returned in less than half an hour, with the welcome news, that a chair was ready, and waited in College-street.—Miss Betsey had no way of passing, but by the same the footman had done, which she easily did, by being lifted by my lord into the window, and descending from it by the help of some steps placed on the other side by the servants of the Prebendary.

It would be superfluous to trouble the reader with any speeches made by Lord ———, and his sister to Miss Betsey, or the replies she made to them ; I shall only say, that passing through his house, and the College-garden, at the door of which the chair attended, she went into it, preceded by Lord ———'s footman, muffled up in a cloak, and without a flambeau, to prevent being known, in case she should be met by Bloomacre, or either of his companions : and with this equipage she arrived safe at home, though not without a mind strangely perplexed at the meaning of this adventure.



C H A P. XXI.

Gives an explanation of the former, with other particulars, more agreeable to the reader in the repetition, than to the persons concerned in them.

IT was near ten o'clock when Miss Betsy came home, and Mr. Goodman, who had been very uneasy at her staying out so late, especially as she was alone, was equally rejoiced at her return; but as well as Lady Mellasin, was surprised on hearing by what accident she had been detained;—they knew not how to judge of it, — there was no circumstance in the whole affair which could make them think Mr. Bloomacre had any designs of the sort Lord ——— had suggested; yet did Mr. Goodman think himself obliged, as the young lady's guardian, to go to that gentleman, and have some talk with him concerning what had passed. — Accordingly he went the next morning to his house, but not finding him at home, left word with his servant that he desired to speak with him as soon as possible: — he came not, however, the whole day, nor sent any message to excuse his
not

not doing so, and this neglect gave Mr. Goodman, and Miss Betsey herself, some room to suspect, he was no less guilty than he had been represented, since had he been perfectly innocent, it seemed reasonable to them, to think he would have come, even of his own accord, to have learned of Miss Betsey the motive of her leaving him in so abrupt and odd a manner; — but how much they wronged him will presently appear, and they were afterwards convinced.

There was an implacable animosity between Lord ——— and Mr. Bloomacre, on account of the former's pretending a right to some lands which the other held, and could not be dispossess'd of by law. — As his lordship knew Mr. Bloomacre was not of a disposition to bear an affront tamely, he had no other way to vent his spleen against him, than by villifying and traducing him in all companies he came into; but this he took care to do in so artful a manner, as to be enabled either to evade, or render what he said impossible to be proved, in case he were called to an account for it.

The affair of Miss Betsey, innocent as it was, he thought gave him an excellent opportunity of gratifying his malice; — he

went early the next morning to the Dean, complained of an insult offered to his house by Mr. Bloomacre, on the score of his sister having brought in a young lady, whom that gentleman had detained in the cloisters, and was going to carry off, by the assistance of some friends he had with him, in a hackney coach.

The Dean, who was also a Bishop, was extremely incensed, as well he might, at so glaring a profanation of that sacred place; and the moment Lord —— had taken his leave, sent for Mr. Bloomacre to come to him. — That gentleman immediately obeying the summons, the Bishop began to reprimand him in terms, which the occasion seemed to require from a person of his function and authority: — Mr. Bloomacre could not forbear interrupting him, though with the greatest respect, saying nothing could be more false and base, than such an accusation; — that whoever had given such an information was a villain, and merited to be used as such. — The prelate, seeing him in this heat, would not mention the name of his accuser; but replied coolly, that it was possible he might be wronged; but to convince him that he was so, he must relate to him the whole truth of the story, and on what grounds a conjecture so much to
the

the disadvantage of his reputation had been formed.—On which Mr. Bloomacre repeated every thing that had passed; and added, that he was well acquainted with the family where the young lady was boarded, and that he was certain she would appear in person to justify him in this point, if his Lordship thought it proper.—“But, said the Bishop, I hear you affronted the Lord ———, by thundering at his door, and abusing his servants.”—“No, my Lord, answered Mr. Bloomacre, Lord ———, though far from being my friend, will not dare to alledge any such thing against me. We were indeed a little surpris'd to see the young lady, who was with us, snatched away in so odd a manner by his sister, who we easily perceived had not the least acquaintance with her.—We continued walking, however, in the cloister, 'till the man whom we had sent for a coach returned, and told us, he had got one, and that it waited at the gate.—We then, indeed, knocked at Lord ———'s door, and being answered from the windows by the servants, in a very impertinent manner, I believe we might utter some words not very respectful, either of his Lordship or his sister, whose behaviour in
“ this

“ this affair I am as yet entirely ignorant.
 “ how to account for.”

The Bishop paused a considerable time, but on Mr. Bloomacre's repeating what he had said before, concerning bringing the lady herself to vouch the truth of what he had related to his Lordship, replied, that there was no occasion for troubling either her or himself any farther;—that he believed there had been some mistake in the business, and that he should think no more of it; on which Mr. Bloomacre took his leave.

Though the Bishop had not mentioned the name of Lord ——— to Mr. Bloomacre, as the person who had brought this complaint against him, yet he was very certain, by all circumstances, that he could be indebted to no other for such a piece of low malice; and this, joined to some other provocations he had received from the ill-will of that nobleman, made him resolve to do himself justice.

He went directly from the deanery in search of the two gentlemen who had been with him in the Abbey when he happen'd to meet Miss Betsy, and having found them both, they went to a tavern together, in order to consult on what was proper to
 be

be done, for the chastisement of Lord
 ———'s folly and ill-nature.

Both of them agreed with Mr. Bloomacre, that he ought to demand that satisfaction, which every gentleman has a right to expect from any one who has injured him, of what degree soever he be, excepting those of royal blood.—Each of them was so eager to be his second in this affair, that they were obliged to draw lots for the determination of the choice;—he who had the ill-luck, as he called it, to draw the shortest cut, would needs oblige them to let him be the bearer of the challenge, that he might at least have some share in inflicting the punishment, which the behaviour of that unworthy Lord so justly merited.

The challenge was wrote, — the place appointed for meeting was the field behind Montague House; but the gentleman who carried it brought no answer back, his Lordship telling him only that he would consider on the matter, and let Mr. Bloomacre know his intentions.

Mr. Bloomacre as the principal, and the other as his second, were so enraged at this, that the latter resolved to go himself, and force a more categorical answer.
 He

—He did so, and Lord —— having had time to consult his brother, and, as it is said, some other friends, told him, he accepted the challenge, and would be ready with his second at the time and place appointed in it.

Mr. Bloomacre did not go home that whole day, therefore knew nothing of the message that had been left for him by Mr. Goodman, 'till it was too late to comply with it; but this seeming remissness in him, was not all that troubled the mind of that open and honest-hearted guardian of Miss Betsy.—Mr. Truworth and Mr. Staple had both been at his house the day before: — the former, on hearing his mistress was abroad, left only his compliments, and went away, though very much pressed to come in by Miss Flora, who seeing him through the parlour window, ran to the door herself, and intreated he would pass the evening there:—Mr. Staple came the moment after, and met his rival coming down the steps that led up to the door; — Mr. Truworth saluted him in passing with the usual complaisance, which the other returned in a very cool manner, and knocked hastily at the door, “ — I imagine, (said he to the footman “ who opened it) that Miss Betsy is “ not at home, by that gentleman’s hav-
 VOL. I. N “ ing

“ing so early taken leave; but I would
 “speak with Mr. Goodman, if he be at
 “leisure.”

He was then shewed into the back parlour, which was the room where Mr. Goodman generally received those persons who came to him upon business:—on hearing who it was that asked for him, he was a little surprised, and desired he would walk up stairs; but Mr. Staple not knowing but there might be company above, returned for answer, that he had no more than a word or two to say to him, and that must be in private; on which the other immediately came down to him.

This young lover having by accident been informed, not only that Mr. Trueworth made his addresses to Miss Betsy, but also that it was with him she had been engaged during all that time he had been deprived of seeing her, thought it proper to talk with Mr. Goodman, concerning this new obstacle to his wishes;—that worthy gentleman was extremely troubled to be questioned on an affair, on which he had given Miss Betsy his word not to interfere, but finding himself very much pressed by a person whose passion he had encouraged, and who was the son of one
 with

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with whom he had lived in a long friendship, he frankly confessed to him, that Mr. Truworth was indeed recommended to Miss Betsy by her brother ; — told him, he was sorry the thing had happened so, but had nothing farther to do with it ; — that the young lady was at her own disposal, as to the article of marriage ; — that he was ignorant how she would determine, and that it must be from herself alone he could learn what it was he might expect or hope.

Mr. Staple received little satisfaction from what Mr. Goodman had said, but resolved to take his advice, and if possible bring Miss Betsy to some éclaircissement of the fate he was to hope or fear — Accordingly he came the next morning to visit her : — a liberty he had never taken, nor would now, if he had not despaired of finding her in the afternoon.

She gave herself, however, no airs of resentment on that account, but when he began to testify his discontent concerning Mr. Truworth, and the apprehensions he had of his having gained the preference in her heart, though the last who had solicited that happiness, she replied, in the most haughty tone, that she was surprised at the freedom he took with her ; — that
she

she was, and ever would be, mistress of her actions and sentiments, and no man had a right to pry into either; and concluded with saying, that she was sorry the civilities she had treated him with, should make him imagine he had a privilege of finding fault with those she shew'd to others.

It is not to be doubted but that he made use of all the arguments in his power to convince her, that a true and perfect passion was never unaccompanied with jealous fears; — he acknowledged the merits of Mr. Trueworth; “but, added he, the more he is possess'd of, the more dangerous he is to my hopes;” — and then begged her to consider the torments he had suffered, while being so long deprived of her presence, and knowing, at the same time, a rival was blessed with it.

Miss Betsey was not at this time in a humour either to be persuaded by the reasons, or softened by the submissions of her lover, and poor Mr. Staple, after having urged all that love, wit, despair, and grief could dictate, was obliged to depart more dissatisfied than he came.

In going out he saw Mr. Goodman in the parlour, who gave him the good morning as he pass'd: — “A sad one it has
“been

“ been to me,” answered he, with something of horror in his countenance; “ but “ I will not endure the rack of many such.” — With these words he flung out of the house, in order to go about what perhaps the reader is not at a loss to guess at.

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CH A P. XXII:

A duel begun, and another fought in the same morning, on Miss Betsy's account, are here related, with the manner in which the different antagonists behaved to each other.

WELL may the God of Love be painted blind! — those devoted to his influence are seldom capable of seeing things as they truly are; — the smallest favour elates them with imaginary hopes, and the least coolness sinks them into despair: — their joys, — their griefs, — their fears more frequently spring from ideal than effective causes. — Mr. Staple judged not, that Miss Betsy refused to ease his jealous apprehensions on the score of Mr. Trueworth, because it was her natural temper to give pain to those that loved her, but because she had really an affection for that gentleman, — looking on himself therefore as now abandoned to all hope, rage an

revenge took the whole possession of his soul, and chased away the softer emotions thence.

Having heard Mr. Trueworth say he lodged in Pall-Mall, he went to the Cocoa-Tree, and there informing himself of the particular house where his rival might be found, sat down and wrote the following billet.

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

“ S I R,

“ B O T H our wishes tend to the pos-
 “ session of one beautiful object; — both
 “ cannot be happy in the accomplishment;
 “ —it is fit therefore the sword should de-
 “ cide the difference between us, and put
 “ an end to those pretensions on the one
 “ side or the other, which it is not pro-
 “ bable either of us will otherwise recede
 “ from. In confidence of your comply-
 “ ing with this proposal, I shall attend
 “ you in the Green Park, between the
 “ hours of seven and eight to-morrow
 “ morning; — as the affair concerns only
 “ ourselves, I think it both needless and
 “ unjust to engage any of our friends in
 “ it, so shall come alone, and expect you
 “ will do the same to, sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ T. STAPLE.”

Mr.

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Mr. Trueworth was at home, and on receiving this, immediately, and without the least hesitation, wrote and sent back by the same messenger, the following answer :

To T. STAPLE, Esq;

“ S I R,

“ THOUGH I cannot but think the
“ decision of our fate ought to be left
“ entirely to the lady herself, to whom,
“ whatever be the fortune of the sword, it
“ must at last be referred ; yet as I cannot,
“ without being guilty of injustice to my
“ own honour and pretensions, refuse you
“ the satisfaction you require, shall not fail
“ to meet you at the time and place men-
“ tioned in yours, ’till when, I am, sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ C. TRUEWORTH.”

By the stile of this letter it may be easily perceived that Mr. Trueworth was not very well pleased with this combat, though the greatness of his courage and spirit would not permit him to harbour the least thought of avoiding it ; yet whatever his thoughts were on this occasion, he visited Miss Betsy the same day, and discovered no part of them in his countenance, — his behaviour, on the contrary,

was rather more sprightly than usual: — he proposed to the two young ladies to go on some party of pleasure. Miss Betsy answered, with her accustom'd freedom, that she should like it very well: but Miss Flora, who had been for three or four days past very sullen and ill-humoured, said one minute she would go, and the next that she would not, and gave herself such odd and capricious airs, that Miss Betsy told her she believed her head was turned: to which the other replied, tartly, that if the distemper was catching, it would be no wonder she should be infected, having it always so near her. — Miss Betsy replied, that she knew no greater proof of madness, than to punish one's self in the hope of mortifying another; — “but that shall never be my case, continued she, as you will find.” Then turning to Mr. Truworth, “If you will accept of my company, without Miss Flora, said she laughing, “we will take a walk into the Park.” — It is not to be doubted but that the lover gladly embraced this opportunity of having his mistress to himself. — “’Tis like Miss Betsy Thoughtless, cried Miss Flora, and only like herself, to go abroad with a man alone.” — Miss Betsy regarded not this reproach. but catching up her fan and gloves,

gloves, gave Mr. Truworth her hand to lead her where she had proposed, leaving the other so full of spite, that the tears gushed from her eyes.

'Tis likely the reader will be pretty much surprised, that Miss Flora, who had always seemed more ready than even Miss Betsy herself, to accept of invitations of the sort Mr. Truworth had made, should now all at once become so averse; but his curiosity for an explanation of this matter must be for a while postponed, others, for which he may be equally impatient, requiring to be first discussed.

Two duels having been agreed upon to be fought on the same morning, the respect due to the quality of Lord —, demands we should give that wherein he was concerned the preference in the repetition.

The hour appointed being arrived Lord — and his brother came into the field, — Mr. Bloomacre and his friend appeared immediately after. — “ You are the persons, said Lord —, in an exulting tone, who made the invitation, but we are the first at table.” — ’Tis not yet past the time, replied Bloomacre, looking on his watch, but the later we come, the more eagerly we shall fall to.” In that instant all their swords were

were drawn; but they had scarce time to exchange one thrust before a posse of constables, with their assistants, armed with staves and clubs, rushed in between them, beat down their weapons, and carried them all four to the house of the High-Bailiff of Westminster.

That gentleman, by virtue of his office, made a strict examination into what had passed, and having heard what both parties had to say, severely reprimanded the one for having given the provocation, and the other for the manner in which it was resented:—he told them he had a right, in order to preserve the peace of Westminster, and the liberties of it, to demand, that they should find sureties for their future behaviour; but in regard to the quality and character, he would insist on no more than their own word and honour, that the thing should be mutually forgot, and that nothing of the same kind, which now had been happily prevented, should hereafter be attempted.

Lord ——— submitted to this injunction with a great deal of readiness, and Mr. Bloomacre seeing no other remedy, did the same; after which the High Bailiff obliged them to embrace, in token of the sincerity of their reconciliation.

Thus

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Thus ended an affair which had threatened such terrible consequences. It made however a very great noise, and the discourse upon it was no way to the advantage of Lord ——'s character, either for generosity or courage.—Let us now see the sequel of the challenge sent by Mr. Staple to Mr. Truworth.

These gentlemen met almost at the same time, in the place the challenger had appointed:—few words served to usher in the execution of the fatal purpose; Mr. Staple only said, — “Come on, sir, — “Love is the word, and Miss Betsy “Thoughtless be the victor's prize.”—with these words he drew his sword, — Mr. Truworth also drew his, and standing on his defence, seeing the other was about to push, cried, — “Hold, sir! — “your better fortune may triumph over “my life, but never make me yield up “my pretensions to that amiable lady: “—if I die, I die her martyr, and wish “not to live but in the hope of serving “her.”—These words making Mr. Staple imagine, that his rival had indeed the greatest encouragement to hope every thing, added to the fury he was before possessed of, “Die then her martyr,” said he, and running upon him with more force than skill, received a slight wound

in his own breast, while aiming at the other's heart.

It would be needless to mention all the particulars of this combat, — I shall only say, that the too great eagerness of Mr. Staple gave the other an advantage over him, which must have been fatal to him from a less generous enemy ; but the temperate Mr. Trueworth seemed to take an equal care to avoid hurting his rival, as to avoid being hurt by him ; — seeing, however, that he was about to make a furious push at him, he ran in between, closed with him, and Mr. Staple's foot happening to slip, he fell at full length upon the earth, his sword at the same time dropped out of his hand, which Mr. Trueworth took up, — “ The victory is
“ yours, cried he ; take also my life, for I
“ disdain to keep it.” — “ No, replied Mr.
“ Trueworth, I equally disdain to take
“ an advantage, which meer chance has
“ given me : — rise, sir, and let us finish
“ the dispute between us, as become
“ men of honour.” — With these words he returned him his sword. — “ I should
“ be unworthy to be ranked among that
“ number, said Mr. Staple, on receiving
“ it, to employ this weapon against the
“ breast, whose generosity restored it, were
“ any thing but Miss Betsy at stake ;
but

“ — but what is life ! — what is even
 “ honour, without the hope of her ! —
 “ I therefore accept your noble offer, and
 “ death or conquest be my lot ! ” — They
 renewed the engagement with greater vio-
 lence than before : — after several passes,
 all Mr. Truworth’s dexterity could not
 hinder him from receiving a wound on
 his left side, but he gave the other at
 the same time, so deep a one in his right
 arm, that it deprived him in an instant
 of the power of continuing the fight ; on
 which Mr. Truworth dropping the point
 of his sword, ran to him, “ I am sorry,
 “ sir, said he, for the accident that has
 “ happened ; — I see you are much
 “ hurt, — permit me to assist you as well
 “ as I am able, and attend you where
 “ proper care may be taken of you.” —
 “ I do not deserve this goodness, an-
 “ swered Mr. Staple, but it is the will of
 “ heaven that you should vanquish every
 “ way.”

Mr. Truworth then seeing the blood
 run quite down upon his hand, stripped
 up the sleeve, and bound the wound from
 which it issued, as tight as he could with
 his handkerchief, after which they went
 together to an eminent surgeon near Pic-
 cadilly. — On examination of his wounds,
 neither that in his arm, nor in his breast,
 appear

appeared to be at all dangerous, the flesh being only pierced, and no artery or tendon touched. — Mr. Trueworth seemed only assiduous in his cares for the hurts he had given his rival, without mentioning the least word of that which he had received himself, 'till an elderly gentleman, who happened to be with the surgeon when they came in, and had all the time been present, perceiving some blood upon the side of his coat, a little above the hip, cried out, “ Sir, you neglect yourself. — “ I fear you have not escaped unhurt.” — “ A trifle, said Mr. Trueworth, a meer scratch, I believe ; — ’tis time enough to think of that.” — Nor would he suffer the surgeon, though he bled very fast, to come near him, 'till he had done with Mr. Staple. — It was indeed, but a slight wound which Mr. Trueworth had receiv'd, though happening among a knot of veins, occasioned the effusion of a pretty deal of blood, for the stopping of which the surgeon applied an immediate remedy, and told him that it required little for a cure besides keeping it from the air.

Mr. Staple, who had been deeply affected with the concern this generous enemy had expressed for him, was equally rejoiced at hearing the wound he had given him would be attended with no bad
con-

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consequences. — Every thing that was needful being done for both, the old gentleman prevailed upon them to go with him to a tavern a few doors off, having first obtained the surgeon's leave, who told him a glass or two of wine could be of no prejudice to either.

This good-natured gentleman, who was called Mr. Chatfree, used to come frequently to Mr. Goodman's house, had some knowledge of Mr. Staple, and tho' he was wholly unacquainted with Mr. Truworth, conceived so great an esteem for him, from his behaviour towards the person he had fought with, that he thought he could not do a more meritorious action, than to reconcile to each other two such worthy persons. — What effect his endeavours, or rather their own nobleness of sentiments produced, shall presently be shewn.

C H A P. XXIII.

Among other things necessary to be told, gives an account of the success of a plot laid by Mr. Chatfree, for the discovery of Miss Betsy's real sentiments.

THOUGH Mr. Goodman had as yet no intimations of the accidents of that morning, yet was he extremely un-
easy

easy ; — the looks, as well as words of Mr. Staple, in going out of his house the day before, were continually in his mind, and he could not forbear apprehending some fatal consequence would, one time or other, attend the levity of Miss Betfy's behaviour and conduct in regard to her admirers ; he was also both surprised and vexed that Mr. Bloomacre, from whom he expected an explanation of the Westminster-abbey adventure, had not come according to his request. — This last motive of his disquiet was, however, soon removed : Mr. Bloomacre was no less impatient to clear himself of all blame concerning the transactions of that night, had no sooner finished his affair with Lord ———, and was dismissed by the high-bailiff, than he came directly to Mr. Goodman's, and recited to him, and all the ladies, the whole of what had passed.

Miss Betfy laugh'd prodigiously, but Mr. Goodman shook his head, on hearing the particulars related by Mr. Bloomacre, and, after that gentleman was gone, reproved, as he thought it his duty to do, the inconsiderateness of her conduct : — he told her, that as she was alone, she ought to have left the abbey as soon as *divine service* was ended ; — that for a
person

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person of her sex, age, and appearance, to walk in a place where there were always a great concourse of young sparks, who came for no other purpose than to make remarks upon the ladies, could not but be looked on as very odd by all who saw her. — “ There was no rain, said he, ’till
“ a long time after the service was ended,
“ and you might then, in all probability,
“ have got a chair; or if not, the walk
“ over the Park could not have been a
“ very great fatigue.”

Miss Betsy blush’d extremely; not thro’ a conscious shame of imagining what she had done deserved the least rebuke, but because her spirit, yet unbroke; could not bear controul: — she replied, that as she meant no ill, those who censured her were most in fault. — “ That is very
“ true, answered Mr. Goodman; but,
“ my dear child, you cannot but know
“ it is a fault which too many in the
“ world are guilty of. — I doubt not of
“ your innocence, but would have you
“ consider, that reputation is also of some
“ value: — that the honour of a young
“ maid like you, is a flower of so tender
“ and delicate a nature, that the least
“ breath of scandal withers and destroys
“ it. — In fine, that it is not enough to
“ be good, without behaving in such a
“ manner

“ manner as to make others acknowledge
 “ us to be so.”

Miss Betsy had too much understanding not to be sensible what her guardian said on this occasion was perfectly just; and also that he had a right to offer his advice, whenever her conduct rendered it necessary; but could not help being vexed, that any thing she did should be liable to censure, as she thought it merited none: — she made no farther reply, however to what Mr. Goodman said, tho’ he continued his remonstrances, and probable would have gone on much longer, if not interrupted by the coming in of Mr. Chatfree.—This gentleman having parted from the two wounded rivals, came directly to Mr. Goodman’s, in order to see how Miss Betsy would receive the intelligence he had to bring her.

After paying his compliments to Mr. Goodman, and the other ladies, he came towards Miss Betsy, and looking on her with a more than ordinary earnestness in his countenance, “ Ah, madam, said he,
 “ I shall never hereafter see you without
 “ remembring what Cowley says of a lady
 “ who might, I suppose, be like you :

“ So fatal, and withal so fair,

“ We’re told destroying angels are.”

Though

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Though Miss Betsy was not at that time in a humour to have any great relish for raillery, yet she could not forbear replying to what this old gentleman said, in the manner in which she imagined he spoke. — “ You are at least past the age
“ of being destroyed by any weapons I
“ carry about me, cried she ; — but pray
“ what meaning have you in this terrible
“ simile ? ” — “ My meaning is as terrible
“ as the simile, answered he ; and though
“ I believe you to be very much the favourite
“ of heaven, I know not how you
“ will atone for the mischief you have
“ been the occasion of this morning ; —
“ but it may be, continued he, you think
“ it nothing that those murdering eyes
“ of yours have set two gentlemen a
“ fighting.”

Miss Betsy, supposing no other than that he had heard of the quarrel between Mr. Bloomacre and Lord ———, replied merrily, “ Pray accuse my eyes of no such
“ thing, — they are very innocent I assure
“ you,” — “ Yes, (cried Mr. Goodman
“ and Lady Mellasin at the same time) we
“ can clear Miss Betsy of this accusation.”

“ What ! (rejoined Mr. Chatfree, ha-
“ stily, “ was not Mr. Staple and Mr. True-
“ worth

“worth rivals for her love?” — “Mr. Staple and Mr. Truworth,” said Miss Betsey in a good deal of consternation, “pray what of them!” “Oh! the most inveterate duel, answered he; they fought above half an hour, and poor Mr. Staple is dead of his wounds.” — “Dead!” cried Miss Betsey, with a great scream. — Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora seem’d very much alarmed; but Mr. Goodman was ready to sink from his chair, till Mr. Chatfree, unseen by Miss Betsey, winked upon him, in token that he was not in earnest in what he said.

The distraction in which this young lady now appeared, — the concern she express’d for Mr. Staple, and her indignation against Mr. Truworth, would have made any one think the former had much the preference in her esteem, ’till Mr. Chatfree, after having listened to her exclamations on this score, cried out on a sudden, “Ah, madam, what a mistake has the confusion I was involved in made me guilty of. — Alas, I have deceived you, though without designing to do so, — Mr. Staple lives, it is Mr. Truworth who has fallen a sacrifice to his unsuccessful passion for you.”

“True-

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“ Trueworth dead ! cried Miss Betsy,
“ O God !—and does his murderer live
“ to triumph in the fall of the best and
“ most accomplished men on earth ? —
“ Oh ! may all the miseries that heaven
“ and earth can inflict, light on him ! —
“ Is he not secured, Mr. Chatfree ?—Will
“ he not be hanged ?

Mr. Chatfree could hold his countenance
no longer, but bursting into a violent fit
of laughter, “ Ah, Miss Betsy ! — Miss
“ Betsy ! said he, I have caught you ? —
“ Mr. Trueworth I find then is the happy
“ man.” — “ What do you mean, Mr.
“ Chatfree ?” cried Miss Betsy, very much
amazed. — “ I beg your pardon, an-
“ swered he, for the fright I have put
“ you in ; but be comforted, for Mr.
“ Trueworth is not dead I assure you, and
“ I doubt not, lives as much your slave
“ as ever.” — “ I do not care what he is,
“ if he is not dead, said Miss Betsy ; but
“ pray for what end did you invent this
“ fine story ?” — “ Nay, madam, re-
“ sumed he, it is not altogether my own
“ inventing neither ; for Mr. Trueworth
“ and Mr. Staple have had a duel this morn-
“ ing, and both of them are wounded,
“ though not so dangerously as I pretend-
“ ed, merely to try, by the concern yo
“ wo

“ would express, which of them you were
 “ most inclined to favour, — and I have
 “ done it i’faith, — Mr. Truworth is the
 “ man.”

Lady Mellafin, who had not spoke during all this conversation, now cried out,
 “ Aye, Mr. Chatfree, we shall soon have
 “ a wedding, I believe.” — Believe, madam, said he, why your ladyship may
 “ swear it ;— for my part, I will not give
 “ above a fortnight for the conclusion, —
 “ and I will venture to wish the fair bride
 “ joy on the occasion, for he is a fine
 “ gentleman, — a very fine gentleman
 “ indeed, and I think she could not have
 “ made a better choice.” With these words he wiped his mouth, and advanced to Miss Betsy, in order to salute her; but pushing him scornfully back, “ None of
 “ your flights good Mr. Chatfree, said she, if I thought you were in earnest, I
 “ would never see the face of Mr. Truworth more.”

This did not hinder the pleasant old gentleman from continuing his raillery ; — he plainly told Miss Betsy that she was in love, — that he saw the marks of it upon her, and that it was in vain for her to deny it. — Lady Mellafin laughed very heartily to see the fret Miss Betsy was in,
 at

at hearing Mr. Chatfree talk in this manner ; but Miss Flora, to whom one would imagine this scene would have been diverting enough, never opened her lips to utter one syllable ; but made such grimaces, as had they been taken notice of, would have shewn how little she was pleased with it.

Mr. Goodman had been so much struck with the first account given by Mr. Chatfree, that he was not to be roused by any thing that gentleman said afterwards ; — he reflected, that though the consequences of the rencounter between the two rivals had been less fatal than he had been made to imagine, yet it might have happened, and indeed been naturally expected ; he could not forbear therefore interrupting his friend's mirth, by remonstrating to Miss Betsy in the most serious terms, the great error she was guilty of, in encouraging a plurality of lovers at the same time : — he told her, that gentlemen of Mr. Trueworth's and Mr. Staple's character and fortune, ought not to be trifled with. “ Suppose, said he, that one or both of them had indeed been killed, how could you have answered to yourself, or to the world the having been the sad occasion.”